

[darling it's better \(down where it's wetter\)](#) by [Luddleston](#)

Category: Voltron: Legendary Defender

Genre: Anal Sex, Artist/Marine Biologist Lance, Beach Sex, Blow Jobs, First Kiss, First Time, Getting Together, Hand Jobs, Hook-Up, Keith has fangs, Love Bites, M/M, Making Out, Non-Human Genitalia, Play Fighting, Riding, Shapeshifting, Switching, Xenophilia, mermaid au, merman Keith, slight size kink

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Summary:

Lance is a marine biology student working his dream internship for the summer: a tropical island, a beach ten feet from his back door, a boss who's pretty chill except for that crazy part where he believes in merpeople. Okay, that last bit might not be quite what he'd been imagining.

Except that it's all true. There are merpeople living in the cove, and one of them in particular is... seducing him? Yeah, definitely seducing him.

darling it's better (down where it's wetter)

Author's Note:

Written for the vld nsfw big bang!

Alright everyone. Welcome to. The official. SMUTTIEST FIC I HAVE EVER WRITTEN!!! No, seriously, it has more sex scenes than it probably should, even though it's. You know. For the NSFW big bang. so much fish dick, you guys. so much.

Thank you to @aphelions-art for the lovely artwork to go with the fic and for truly bringing it to life!

AND NOW, LET US COMMENCE WITH THE FISH DICK.

Lance left the airport in a taxi without air conditioning, the rolled-down windows only the barest defense against the humid air making his hair frizzy and his skin damp. Pop music crackled over the beaten-up speakers on the dash, and Lance drummed his fingers in time against the handle of his suitcase. He'd been waiting for this internship to start since Pidge got him a phone interview with her brother, who was a marine biologist looking for a research assistant—it'd been the only motivation he'd had to survive finals. It was Lance's dream job: work in his field, in the tropics, with a prodigious genius who lived about thirty seconds from the beach.

The trip was making him a little carsick, though, especially after they veered onto the unpaved, crooked mountain path to the edge of the island, so he stared out the front window to steady himself. Once they escaped the cloud of humidity hanging heavy over the city, a fresh ocean breeze blew through the open window, and Lance leaned his head out, letting it blow his sweaty hair off his forehead, until the driver told him to cut it out.

Lance was out of the taxi as soon as it rolled to a stop, handing the driver's fee through the window and hoisting his duffel bag over his shoulder as he started rolling his suitcase up the dirt driveway. The front of the house was nearly hidden by overgrown tropical plants, and Lance picked up his

suitcase before it got stuck on any more roots. He knocked on the front door, not sure exactly what to expect. He soon found out there was no bracing yourself for Matthew Holt, anyway.

The door slammed open so hard the hinges creaked, followed by a loud, "you must be Lance!"

Matt was a few years older than him, dressed in a short-sleeved button-down that was open to his sternum and a pair of cargo shorts that looked like they belonged on someone who was working much deeper in the jungle. He had his hair tied back into a ponytail and a pair of sunglasses hanging from the pocket of his shirt, and when he smiled, it made the scar on his cheek crinkle up.

"Yeah. Yeah, I'm Lance." He looked around the room, which was *covered* in glass tanks of every size, some of them full of saltwater fish, frogs, and other wildlife, some of them seemingly empty. Overhead, there was a set of shelves full of dead things in jars, and the sofa jammed under the windowsill had a box labeled "LAB EQUIPMENT" next to it which looked like it was full of camping supplies instead. Through the archway to his right, there were even more fishtanks and a desk, the wall behind it plastered with postcards.

Matt reached out a hand to shake Lance's, a tan line on his wrist displaying the place he usually wore a watch. "Nice to meet you," he said, "your room's upstairs—the whole apartment's upstairs, actually, just the lab down here. Well, and the kitchen." The kitchen in question was to the left, tiny and looked mostly unused.

At Matt's suggestion, Lance took his things to his room, which required walking out the back door and up a set of external stairs. In Lance's case, it also required pausing to take in the view.

The house was situated on the edge of a cliffside. There was a set of stairs carved straight out of the rock leading down to a white, sandy beach surrounded on all three sides by cliff walls. The ocean washed into the little bay in gentle waves, filling tide pools and depositing shells on the beach. Lance leaned on the railing cutting across the back porch, eyes following

the line of the horizon, where the sea was only a few shades bluer than the sky.

"Great view, isn't it?" Matt asked, and Lance startled so bad he almost pitched over the railing.

"Oh! Yeah, yes, it's awesome," he said, picking up his bags again.

"I've been here a year and a half," Matt said, "still haven't gotten used to how beautiful that cove is. It's the best part about this place—ecologically and aesthetically." He followed Lance up the stairs, pausing behind him when he reached the top and looked out across the coastline again, because the view was even *better* up here.

Matt directed him to his room, just right of the doorway, and Lance set his things down next to the bed. The room was pretty bare, just a bed with a wooden frame and an almost-matching side table next to it. There was a door to his left, next to a long crack in the plaster wall, which Lance presumed to be the bathroom.

Compared to downstairs, this area of the house actually felt livable, a matching sofa set across from a television, a bookshelf pushed crookedly into a corner, a locally-made tapestry hanging on the wall. It still felt a little haphazard, but Lance assumed that was just Matt's *modus operandi*. A pile of half-opened mail sat on the a hand-carved wooden table against the back wall and a bunch of books were stacked at odd angles on the coffee table. There was another door across the room from Lance's, presumably Matt's bedroom, and it was propped open with a box full of file folders to let the breeze in.

"The place is a little... old," Matt said, looking at a hole in the plaster next to the loveseat, at the uneven floorboards. "But it's held up well."

"It's cool," Lance said, having grown up in a fixer-upper that they never had the time to fix up. "I like the view from my room." His windows were small and square, but they overlooked the ocean, and the direction of them suggested a view of the sunset every night. "So... should we get started?"

Matt shook his head. "Nah, I'll walk you through my research tomorrow," he said. "Take some time to settle in, head down to the cove if you want. It's a private beach, mostly because nobody lives around here."

"How far is it to town?" Lance asked.

Matt squinted, trying to remember. "Hour and a half? Depends on how fast you drive. But if you want to, you can take the ATV, it's out in the shed that way." He pointed over his shoulder.

Lance didn't know how to drive an ATV. Veronica did, though, so maybe he'd call her for some pointers. "So... you don't really see a whole lot of other people, then?"

Matt groaned, dropping onto the couch. "Not really, no. It drove me crazy the first year." He kicked his feet up on the coffee table, giving the middle distance a wistful half-smile. "But I met somebody who's out here a lot. He's great, kind of brilliant, and..." Matt cut himself off with a sigh that sounded almost dreamy. Lance thought it was sort of cute. And he liked having some drama to enjoy, even if he was living an hour and a half from civilization with only one person's love life to meddle in.

His social life probably wasn't gonna be that exciting for the summer, but hey. He got to hang out on a beach every day, he was cool with that.

Per Matt's suggestion, Lance went down to the cove that first night, taking his sketchbook and a little palette of watercolors with him, because he bet the place was killer at sunset.

His bet was correct. The sky in front of him went from pale blue to pink and gold in a space of minutes. Lance sat cross-legged on the beach, doing his best to recreate the scene in front of him, despite the low light and the jet lag. Lance was a scientist by trade—well, a science student—but ever since high school, he'd spent his free time drawing and painting. One of his professors told him he'd have a career in medical illustration, but Lance wasn't *that* good. He just sometimes liked painting sunsets.

Lance left his art supplies on a flat rock near the stairs once the light had almost faded and the sea was burnished red and inviting. He waded in until the waves were at his calves, looking out at the sea glittering before him.

It grew slowly darker, but not so dark that Lane missed the black shape sliding through the shadows, tail cutting a distinct path. Recognizing the pattern of movement, he scrambled back out of the water, sand skidding under his feet, because *hooooly shit*, that was definitely a shark. He peered from where he stood, inches deep in the water, trying to catch a glimpse of it again, but this time, the shape looked like just another shadow, sinking back into the waves.

Huh.

He really needed to get some sleep.

It took a week and a half for Lance to find the notes. The only reason he even stumbled across them was because Matt had sat them neatly on a shelf, three bound journals, all the same height, flush with the edge of the shelf and bookended by a dead jellyfish in a jar, like Matt had been very intentional about placing them. This was strange because Matt wasn't intentional about placing anything anywhere. Lance had once found a day-old sandwich on top of one of the fish tanks. And not the one with the lid, no, it was balanced on a plate on the corner, inches from plopping in and ruining the biome.

Lance pulled the journals down, because he was curious to see what Matt cared enough about to keep so well-organized. He was suspecting notes on a new species Matt had discovered in his cramped, all-caps handwriting, complete with diagrams. And yeah, he got all that. Then he reached this part that said "*Aquatic Humanoids*" and had to re-read it about four times to make sure he was getting it right.

Lance flipped through the pages, skimming over Matt's analysis of a species supposedly inhabiting the bay, which he described as, "six-to-eight-foot-long semi-aquatic mammals with the torsos of humans and the tails of

tropical fish." Holy fuck. Holy *fuck*. Did Pidge know her brother was an *insane person*?

These had to be fictional. Some kind of joke, a fake journal made to look like a real scientific discovery. That was definitely the kind of prank Pidge would pull, so maybe Matt would do the same, maybe—

"Oh, you found those," Matt said, standing in the doorway, watching him turn, mortified, to look him in the face. "Interesting, right?"

"I mean... I guess. It's... something," Lance said, still thumbing through the first journal. He hadn't even gotten to the second one. What was in there? Bigfoot?

Oh, fuck, Pidge totally believed in Bigfoot. It could be Bigfoot.

Matt plucked one of the subsequent journals off the table where Lance had left them, opening it to near the center and pointing at a Polaroid that was paperclipped to one of the open pages. It featured a distant shape that looked distinctly like a man with sprawling black fins attached at the waist. Too blurry and small for much detail, but Lance squinted at it anyway. "This is the first sighting I actually got a picture of," he said. His picture had all the verifiability of that shot of the Loch Ness monster.

"You're... you're kidding," Lance said, "right? This is some kind of prank?"

"What? No!" Matt glared at him, angry at even the suggestion. "No, they're really out there—Lance, this is the most amazing scientific discovery of our century."

"You really believe *mermaids* are real?"

Matt snapped the journal shut and rolled his eyes. "I mean, that's a bit of a reductive term, but yes, they are." He snatched the other book out of Lance's hand and stacked the three of them neatly on the shelf again.

"No. What? No. You're insane." Lance shook his head, trying not to roll his eyes right back. "There's not... there's not a bunch of mermaids just—just

chilling out there in the ocean!" His voice rose the longer he spoke, and Matt folded his arms across his chest, defensive.

"They keep to themselves, mostly," he said. "But they come onshore sometimes. Even into town."

"And how the hell do they do that? Aren't they supposed to have fins?" Lance was starting to find it hard to believe Matt was fucking with him. If he was, he'd have to be a damn good actor, because his irritation looked very real.

"Lance, they can metamorphize their fins into legs, it's a chemical process." Matt spoke like he was trying to explain photosynthesis to a confused freshman bio student. Like it was obvious. Like *Lance* was the crazy one. How could somebody so scientific and... and *mostly* normal have completely lost it like this?

"I can't take you seriously," he said, "you're telling me there's a bunch of fucking mermaids just wandering around the island? Are you sure you weren't just talking to someone who was, I dunno, high as balls or something?" Was *Matt* high? Lance was pretty sure he'd know if Matt was high.

Matt nudged his glasses out of the way to pinch the bridge of his nose. "I expect this kind of response from most people," he said, "but from Pidge's description of you, I thought you might be more open-minded."

"Dude. I'm open-minded about plenty of things. I can't... I just can't believe this kind of—you do realize you sound like a *crazy person*, right? Like, you're making me feel like I should be worried about your mental health!" His voice rose in pitch with each word, until he was practically shouting. His mind reeled, still half-convinced it was a prank. The other half was convinced Matt was totally insane.

"I'm done talking about this," Matt said, muffled because his hand was still covering his face. He sat in his desk chair and spun until Lance could only see the messy back of his hair. "If you want to think I'm crazy, that's... well, that's your prerogative, I guess. Just leave me alone until you can speak to

me without yelling about my mental health." He picked up a pen from the scattering of them next to his desktop computer and started tapping it against the pages of a notebook he had open on the desk.

"I... Matt, I'm—"

"Apologize later," Matt said, "when you're actually sorry and not just embarrassed I caught you being an asshole."

Lance had hardly seen anything besides a smile on Matt's face, but this didn't feel unprecedented. Matt may have been cheerfully disorganized most of the time, but he was a serious academic and would be truly hurt if someone denied the legitimacy of any of his work. All the more reason for Lance to question him suddenly spouting crap about mermaids.

He backed out of Matt's office without another question, because Matt would probably ignore him if he kept talking, grabbing some leftovers out of the kitchen because he suspected he wouldn't be welcome at dinner.

Lance felt like an asshole. He shut himself in his room and opened the windows, laying on his bed until the sea breeze made him cold and he had to get under the blankets. The food he'd grabbed went untouched for a long while, and then he got hungry enough that his bad mood was outweighed by his appetite.

He tried to read, but all his research notes just made him think about Matt, and so instead, he called Hunk, because if there was one person who could give him advice without making him feel like a failure, it was Hunk.

"Hey, man!" Hunk answered, cheerful, on the third ring. "How's the ocean?"

"It's... the ocean is great," Lance said, unable to sound properly enthused. He paused, picking at the chapped skin on his lower lip with his teeth.

"You okay, man?"

"I think I might've just lost my job."

"Wait, what happened?" Hunk's tone immediately fell, and Lance wished he could've hidden Hunk in a suitcase or something, because having a big arm around him and a friendly pat on the shoulder would've gone real well with those words.

"My boss... Matt, he hates me now," Lance said. "I was a total dick to him, and, and. I don't know. I don't know how to fix it."

"Lance, buddy," Hunk said, soothing enough that the tension eased a little in Lance's shoulders. "You're spending all your time with a single other person—of course he's going to get all the cool, fun Lance and all the pissed-off Lance too."

"Yeah, but. He's kind of..." Lance fumbled with the idea of telling Hunk exactly what was going on, then took a breath and decided to go for it. "He's got these journals, right? About this new species he found?"

"Yeah?"

"Yeah, and, okay, that's normal, but this species, they're... they're mermaids, Hunk. The dude thinks he found a fuckin' mermaid swimming around the cove or something."

"Seriously? Is he... okay? Up there?"

"He seems to think so." Lance settled back into the bed, relieved that someone else thought this was batshit. "And that's why I feel like a dick, because I basically told him he might be having some kind of psychotic delusion, and that was kind of an asshole thing to do, because I'm definitely not a licensed psychologist."

Hunk hummed like he was thinking. "I mean, I can ask Pidge, but what about the rest the job stuff? Is it all paranormal weirdness?"

"No, see, that's the thing, the rest of his research is really solid," Lance said, "he's super passionate about it, too, and I don't think he's crazy, but. This is a lot to do just to fuck with me."

"Yeah, he could totally be messing with you, dude."

"I don't think so." Lance frowned, pulling his blanket further up onto his shoulders. "He seemed really hurt when I didn't believe him."

"Then all you can do is say you're sorry and help him with the, uh, normal stuff," Hunk said. "He might be a little wacky, whatever. But I know you want to stay there, or you wouldn't be panicking like this about maybe losing the internship, so you gotta work with him."

Lance nodded and then, when he realized Hunk couldn't see him, said, "yeah." He picked at a fray on the edge of one of his pillowcases. "Sorry to just call and dump all this on you, by the way."

"Nah. Just sleep on it, and then tell me how it goes tomorrow, okay?"

"Sure. Thanks, buddy. You always know what to say." Lance yawned and snuggled further into his bed.

"Yeah, it's because I'm the only one of us who knows how to act like a normal person."

"Mm-hm. Hey. Tell me about some stupid shit to distract me?"

"Okay, yeah, you wanna know about this dumb thing Pidge made? It was robot to go get the peanut butter."

Lance fell asleep before Hunk finished the story, but Hunk never minded that.

The next morning, Lance spent a good thirty minutes in the shower, rehearsing what he was going to say to Matt. Then he remembered he was supposed to be actually showering, and finished the tail end of it freezing because he'd used up all the hot water. His teeth were still chattering a little as he left the bathroom, but the morning heat was starting to beat down on the house, so it didn't take long for him to adjust.

Matt wasn't in his room. Or he was dead asleep. Lance knocked again, a little less gently. The door creaked open a bit and he poked his head in, just to make sure Matt wasn't asleep or ignoring him. Although, Lance probably deserved it if Matt was ignoring him.

His bed was unmade and empty, last night's pajamas sitting in the center of it. Lance had never been in Matt's room. It was actually a little smaller than his, but it had two windows that each took up an entire wall, so Lance could tell why Matt chose this one. There were a couple more polaroids thumbtacked into the wall by the head of the bed, one of the beach, one of Matt and Pidge that must've been older—Pidge didn't have glasses and Matt didn't have his scar, and one of Matt smiling at the camera while a dark-haired man with incongruously white bangs looked adoringly at him. That guy might also have been the source of the oversized white tank top on Matt's bed, and it had Lance backing up and closing the door, because right, this was Matt's *bedroom*, and Matt had... well, had something with a guy, so Lance probably shouldn't have been nosing around.

Downstairs was just as empty, and the place was tiny and had thin enough walls to hear someone walking around even if they were in another room, so it wasn't easy to hide. Lance doubted Matt would be standing still just out of sight around a corner or something.

He made himself a piece of toast for breakfast and ate it while standing in the kitchen, leaning against the counter, facing the window and wondering if he'd find Matt if he just wandered around outside long enough. It was a small island. Also, Matt was predictable and would likely be either on the beach or at one of the locations he was performing research, but Lance still thought it'd be a little weird to ambush him while he was working. Although, Lance was supposed to be helping Matt if he was working, so maybe it wouldn't be that weird.

He went for the beach first, because it was early enough that Matt probably hadn't started work for the day, nearly skidding down the stairs because he was so nervous, and once he had his feet planted in the sand, he realized two things.

One: Matt hadn't come this way.

Two: Matt was right.



There was a man laying in the sand a few yards from Lance, except that the bottom half of him didn't look human at all. He had a coiling, purple tail in

place of legs and feet, and he was currently frowning at it, because the wide fins at the base had a tear down one side.

Lance rubbed his eyes and blinked a couple times, and when he looked up, the guy was still there, and he still had a tail attached at the hips, and he also didn't look like he was doing too hot, so Lance took a hesitant step toward him.

"Are you... are you okay?"

When the *fucking merman* looked at him directly, his face looked even less human. His eyes were Crayola-marker-violet, and there was something ethereal about his face that may have been caused by the early morning light or his wet hair curling against his forehead like charcoal smudges on pale skin. His cheeks were lined with lavender stripes, which followed the curve of his neck, matching the ones that hugged his ribcage and pointed at his hips.

"Do I fucking look okay?" He spoke near-perfect English, only blurred by the shape of his teeth. Lance didn't notice them until he opened his mouth, but holy shit, those were some giant canines. He was pretty sure those qualified as fangs.

Lance approached slowly, hands outstretched like he was walking toward a feral dog, not a mostly-human person. "I'm just trying to help you," he said, speaking slowly.

The merman made a little sound like a growl and snapped his teeth at Lance. "You're not doing a great job at it."

Lance dropped his arms, straightening up and rolling his eyes. "Okay, well, excuse me, I happen to have never seen a fuckin' mer-person before, so sorry if I happen to be a little... uh..."

"A little bit of an asshole?"

"How do you know how to swear, anyway!?"

One of his perfectly-shaped brows arched. "Matt, obviously. I thought you knew him."

"What? Yeah. I'm his research assistant—how did you know that?" Lance knelt beside him, as close as he dared, examining the tear in his fins. It was ragged and about half a foot long, not bleeding much, probably because the tissue was too thin, but it looked like it'd tear even more if he tried to swim with it.

"You came from his house. I was trying to find him."

"You and me both, buddy." Lance reached out to touch his fin but it curled away from him, and he got a defensive glare from fish-boy.

His hands dug into the sand and Lance became suddenly aware of how muscular his arms and chest were. They'd have to be, if he was swimming all day long. It was just logical, unlike the fact that Lance's throat was dry for no damn reason.

His fishy new friend turned to look at the house like he was approximating the distance, and the markings (tattoos?) on his hips seemed to curve with him. So, okay, maybe there was a reason Lance couldn't quite breathe anymore. "Are you going to take me to his lab or what?"

"Huh? Oh, yeah. I guess that works," Lance said, hands still hovering in the general region of the giant purple fin. "I, uh. I gotta pick you up for that, dude."

He got a critical once-over. "Can you?"

"Fuck you, yes I can!" Lance turned and crouched in front of the merman, instructing him to put his hands over Lance's shoulders, because piggyback seemed like the only way Lance could carry somebody that big.

Okay, one, two, three—

Holy fuck, he was heavy. "Jesus! Why do you weigh so much?"

"I don't have twigs for legs like you." His voice was a little bit muffled because Lance had leaned forward and it pitched his face into his shoulder, and Lance was not apologizing for maybe smushing his nose a little bit. He headed for the stairs, walking as fast as he could, because he knew he wasn't gonna be able to take this for long. His arms were already straining, hands clasped around the back of the merman's tail, where his ass would've been if he was human. It didn't feel like an ass. It felt like he had a wet fish on his back.

"What's your name, anyway?" Lance asked, struggling to keep his footing on the stairs. And fuck, there were a lot of stairs. Had there been this many stairs on his way down? He decided he wasn't going to bother going all the way around to the lab; he'd just dump fish-boy in the bathtub until Matt got back.

"Keith."

Lance nearly dropped him, and paused to hoist him higher up. "Okay, you're fucking with me. What kind of mermaid is named Keith?"

"*I'm* named Keith," Keith said again, "I mean, my actual name is in my native language, and it's impossible for you to pronounce. Or hear. Since it's sonar-based, and all."

"Okay, sure, whatever, I guess that's as believable as anything else," Lance said, "you know, Keith, maybe this all just seems reasonable because I've been dreaming the whole time. Don't you think that would make sense?"

"You're not dreaming," Keith grumbled. His breath—oh, interesting, he could breathe air just fine—was hot on Lance's shoulder.

"That's exactly what a dream would say." Lance wobbled a little on the next couple steps, because Keith had become no easier to carry. Actually, he'd argue the opposite. "No, that's totally it. I read all Matt's crazy notes about mermaids, and then I fell asleep, and then I woke up—except I didn't—and I found you, because, uh, my subconscious, and shit. Can you get that door?"

Keith reached for the doorknob and turned it enough so Lance could stumble through, shouldering his way into his own open bedroom door and deciding that it was way too much work to put Keith in the bathtub, because that would involve lifting, and turning him, and yeah, he should just set him on the bed. His tail was mostly dry by now, anyways.

"What are you doing?"

"Let go of me!" Lance said, because Keith was still clinging to his shoulders. "I can't put you on the bed if you're still holding—"

That was about as far as he got, because leaning forward with Keith still on his back overbalanced him, and he flopped face-first onto the bed in an ungraceful heap, not even reacting fast enough to catch himself with his hands or keep his head from bouncing back up to smack Keith in the chin.

There was a splash of cold seawater over his legs and the bedsheets, like someone had thrown a bucket of it on him, and Lance twisted around, because suddenly, the weight of Keith's giant-ass tail was no longer heavy on him.

When he noticed the pair of legs framing his, he realized why. "Your tail is... what? *What?*"

Keith's tail was gone, replaced by a very human lower half. A very naked human lower half. And Lance was panicking, because there was a naked dude in his bed, and the naked dude was just kind of sitting on him, so there was very much a dick on him. Lance grabbed the sheets (completely soaked) to stifle his instinct to shove Keith off of him.

"Oh. Yeah. My tail turns to seawater if I'm out of the ocean long enough," Keith said, like this was completely normal and *oh god his dick was still right there*. Lance was T-minus thirty seconds from a boner problem, because Keith may have been a supernatural being that Lance didn't think was real until like twenty minutes ago, but he was also a really hot dude.

"*Get the fuck off of me,*" Lance said, his voice squeaking and cracking like he was thirteen again. Keith obliged, standing, next to the bed with his arms

crossed, looking nonplussed about the whole thing. "Could you? Um? You're really naked right now, you know that, right?"

Keith glanced down at himself and then back up at Lance. "I'm always naked," he said. "I just had fins before."

"Okay, well would you put some clothes on?" Lance stood and started pulling the soppy blankets off the bed, patting the mattress to make sure it stayed dry.

"Do I look like I have clothes lying around?" Keith unfolded his arms, setting his hands on his hips, completely unselfconscious. Not that he had a reason to be self-conscious.

"Yeah, I guess not." Lance rifled through his dresser, looking for something that would fit Keith. "You can borrow something of mine." His shorts were starting to drip onto the floor because Keith's dumb tail dematerialized all over them, so he kicked those off and toward the blanket pile. He was keeping his boxers on, though, thank you very much.

When he looked back, Keith was sitting on the bed and was not being very demure about it, one of his legs up on the mattress and the other foot set on the ground. He still hadn't developed a concern for his modesty, but Lance didn't stare at his dick. That much.

"I'm going to put dry clothes on," Lance said, "you, uh, here." He tossed a pair of shorts in Keith's direction, and Keith just frowned, pinching them between two fingers like he was holding a rat by the tail. Lance ignored him and walked into the bathroom. He pulled the door shut behind himself, leaning on the sink and taking a few good deep breaths.

What the hell was his life. What the *hell* was his *life*?

He looked into the mirror above the sink and his reflection stared back, looking a little horrified. He thought he had the right to be. There was a real live merman in his room, refusing to put on pants. Lance wasn't sure if this was a blessing or a curse. Keith's constant angry glaring made it feel like more of a curse.

He sighed and stripped his shirt off, because the hem was soaking wet, and then let his boxers drop to the tile with a wet smack. He pulled a towel off the rack next, turning around to see Keith standing in the doorway.

Wait.

"Keith, what the fuck."

Yep, there was still a merman in his room refusing to put on pants, and he also just saw Lance's entire ass, so that was a fun development.

"I'm not putting clothes on," Keith said, still holding the shorts and wrinkling his nose like wearing them was infinitely worse than wandering around buck-ass naked.

"Why not!" Lance screeched, continuing to *not* stare at Keith's dick. He shoved the towel over his own junk, because he had a sense of modesty and propriety and oh, wow, Keith was getting way up in his personal space bubble. He had Lance backed against the sink, and was leaning in to glare at him even harder, crumpling the shorts in his fist like they were personally offending him even more than Lance was.

"Because," Keith said, slowly, like Lance was an idiot and Keith was restraining himself from biting his throat out right there, "my skin gets really dry when I'm not in the ocean. And it'd be way worse if I wore clothes, so I'm not putting any of those on my body."

"Oh my *god!*" Lance looked skyward, asking whatever deity put fish-people on this planet for assistance. "Would you just put on some moisturizer and some pants?"

Keith did that thing with his eyebrow again. It looked sexier when he was naked. Lance filed that away to think about when he had some alone time. "Moisturizer?"

"Yes! You know, you put it on your skin to keep it from getting dry?"

Keith gave him a blank look. Apparently they didn't have Underwater Lush.

Lance shifted so he was holding his towel up with one hand and reached into the cabinet behind the mirror, tossing a container of moisturizer at Keith, who caught it and inspected the label. He turned it left and then right, then looked back at Lance. "I can't read."

"Yeah, I see that, you've got it upside-down." Lance pressed a hand over his mouth to hide his laughter. Keith looked at him like he knew Lance was laughing anyway. "Just put it on," Lance said, glancing out the window to keep from looking at Keith again, because Keith was adorable when he wasn't threatening, and Lance was weak to a combination of adorable and naked.

"I don't know what this is, I'm not putting it on myself," he said, throwing it back at Lance, who fumbled but managed to catch it.

"What, do you need a *demonstration*?"

"Yes."

Lance sighed heavily, tucking one edge of the towel in so it wouldn't fall off if he let go. "Fine. Okay, you literally just put some on your fingertips, and —" Lance turned to face the mirror as he rubbed it into his face, a little annoyed that Keith was messing up his skincare routine, because he was supposed to do this at night, but whatever. He spun back around when he was done, meeting Keith's unimpressed stare with a flat, "ta-da."

"That's not where I'm putting it, though," he said. "It needs to go on my legs, and here." He turned, gesturing at his lower back, and oh, wow, when he didn't have fish fins, he sure had a fantastic ass. Lance swore Keith was smirking when he turned back around. "Show me that."

"I'm not. I don't. Why?" Lance set the lotion on the sink because his hands were starting to get a little flaily. At this point, he'd forgotten all about finding Matt, apologizing to him, or asking him to fix Keith's tail. Matt? Matt who? Keith was stepping closer to him again, picking up the moisturizer and tipping the open jar side to side, considering the consistency of it.

"I need to make sure it won't hurt me," he said.

"I mean, I don't know your *skin type*," Lance said. "This stuff's pretty safe, I mean, it's all-natural and shit, you'll be fine."

"Okay," Keith said, trying to hand it back to him.

"Why? No. You need to—are you trying to get me to put this on you?" Lance took it, and Keith turned around again. The markings that reached his face trailed all the way back to his shoulder blades, running parallel with the ones that covered his hips for a little bit. Lance reached out to touch one, and Keith didn't startle or try to move away when Lance's fingers traced the mark on his back.

"I think it would be best if you apply it," Keith said. Lance couldn't come up with a single damn reason why, but Keith was pointing out the place on his lower back where Lance was supposed to be putting this stuff, and circling around him so that he could lean against the sink, and fuck, Lance hoped Keith didn't look in the direction of his crotch, because the towel was hiding almost nothing.

Keith's skin was warm, and felt soft enough that he didn't even need the moisturizer, but hey, what did Lance know about merpeople? He rubbed the product in, fingers and thumbs moving in slow circles, trying not to show that he was paying a little more attention to the dimples just above Keith's ass.

Okay. Okay. Lance could do this. He had come to terms with the fact that merpeople were real. Now he just had to come to terms with the fact that one of them was naked in front of him and asking Lance to touch him right up next to his ass. His breath came out shaky, and he didn't notice until it ruffled the back of Keith's hair.

"Keith, this is a little bit..."

"What?"

"I dunno. Intimate, maybe?" Lance was just holding his hips now, leaning in close enough that he could smell the saltwater that had dried against Keith's skin.

"Do you have an issue with that?" Keith asked, meeting his gaze in the mirror, his eyes looking even more violet now. His cheeks were pink, and Lance wasn't sure it was because he'd been on the beach so long he started to get sunburned, or because he was blushing.

"No, I don't, I just—are you sure? Are we, uh... what are we doing? What are you doing?"

Keith's grin flashed his fangs at Lance, and oh, hey, he could probably hold the fucking towel up with just his dick now. What was he doing? Why was he turned on by someone who might eat him alive? Keith's hands took his wrists. Oh, his fingers were cold, and *oh*, he was pulling Lance's hands around to the front of him, tugging him closer. "I'm getting what I want," Keith said, leaning his head back against Lance's shoulder. He was close enough that he could definitely feel what was going on with Lance's towel situation. "Don't you want to get what you want?"

"I. Um. I don't know what I want?"

Keith blew out a sigh that ruffled his bangs. "I could've sworn you weren't an idiot. Do you want me to get you off?"

Yes, absolutely, yes, he wanted that.

What should have come out of his mouth was something like, *fuck yes, now I'm going to be debonair and sexy and take your breath away, but like, in a hot way that involves orgasms*. Instead, he said, "are you asking me to have sex with you!?" in the squeakiest, most unsexy way possible.

"I really thought I was making that obvious," Keith said. "Do humans not do flirting right?"

"No, what, no, humans totally do flirting right."

"Oh, so it's just you who doesn't, then."

"Fuck off, Keith," Lance said, but honestly, this man could roast him as much as he wanted and Lance would still be into him. Keith ground his ass back against Lance's cock and Lance made a high sound in his throat that he couldn't quite swallow. His hands lay still on Keith's belly, and his palms were definitely sweating now.

Keith narrowed his eyes at Lance in the mirror and Lance tried to duck behind Keith's head. He just turned to speak to him instead. "Have you ever done this before?"

"Yes! I mean, no! I mean, I'm not! I've done this!"

"Hmm. So I just intimidate you, then," Keith said, putting his hands over Lance's and guiding them down to his hips, his thighs, his—*oh god, he was so hard*. "I think I like that."

Lance pitched forward, whining into Keith's shoulder, little broken noises that Keith seemed to relish, if the way his fangs continued to show was any indication.

"Please tell me you know what to do with this."

Now that. That was just insulting. Lance reached out and dipped two fingers in the still-open jar of moisturizer and smeared them across his opposite palm. Keith watched him curiously, ground against him again, impatient, but when Lance stroked his cock in one torturously slow slide, Keith tipped his head back onto Lance's shoulder and his eyes fell shut almost right away.

Lance knew he wasn't that good. Sure, he was a pretty decent lay, but he'd barely touched Keith and had him melting. He decided to experiment, stroking Keith again, rubbing his thumb over the head of his cock. Keith was leaning almost entirely on Lance now, and he wasn't much less of a dead weight than he'd been with fins. Keith's mouth was open and he was breathing hard, and when Lance turned his head he could see the shape of

Keith's canines lowering to bite his bottom lip. It didn't seem to hurt. Huh. Lance wondered what he'd be like to kiss.

"Keith?" Lance said, when the touching started to make Keith squirm in his arms and grip the edge of the sink hard. He couldn't keep the obnoxious grin off his face when he echoed Keith's, "have *you* ever done this before?"

"I've... no. Not like this."

"Not like...?"

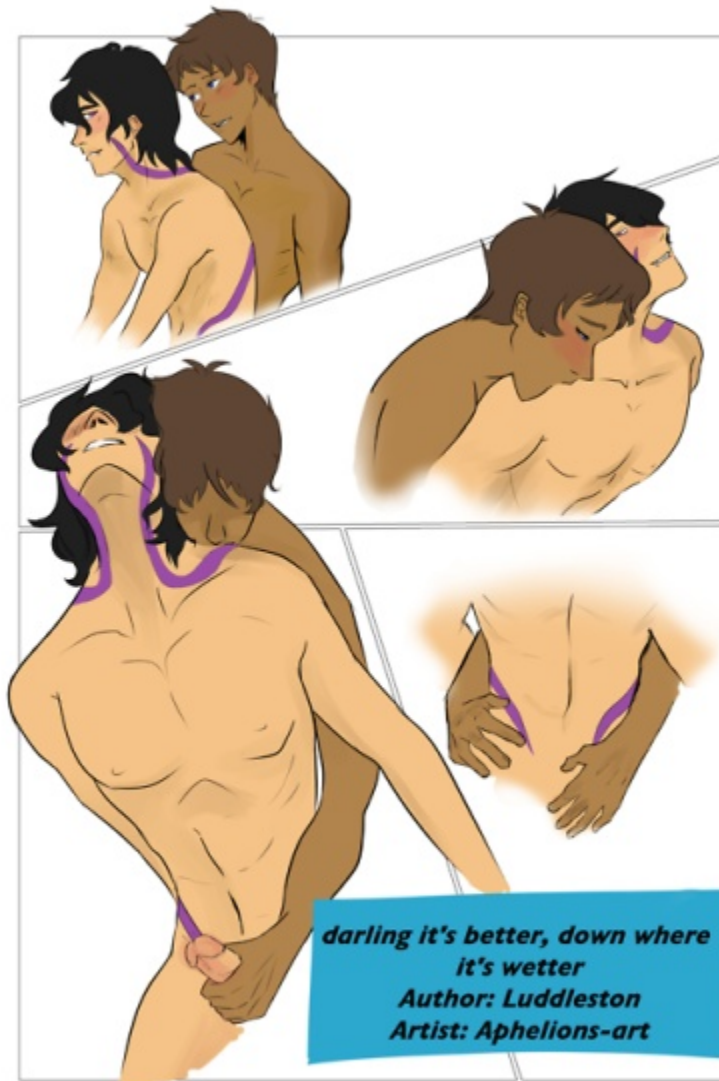
"Never had legs for it before," Keith said, and oh, oh he had for sure been doing some kind of kinky weird fish sex before. Well. It probably wasn't kinky if you were born half-fish.

"Is it different?" Lance asked.

"Yes." Keith didn't elaborate.

Lance leaned forward so he could look over Keith's shoulder. It may have been the worst or best idea he'd ever had. Keith's abs tightened enough that Lance could see a defined six-pack, and his arms flexed to hold himself up against the edge of the sink. From this angle, the markings on his waist and hips looked even more like neon signs pointing right at his dick in Lance's hand, flushed and wet at the tip.

He was never gonna last.



See, here's the thing: Lance had known he was bisexual since like, the first time he saw Brendan Fraser in the Mummy, but he usually went for girls because yeah, girls were great. Girls were the best. But Lance was starting to realize he may have underestimated the effect dudes had on him, because he was thrusting against Keith's ass like some goddamn virgin and making

the world's most embarrassing noises into his neck after seeing Keith fuck into his hand *once*.

"Please explain to me," Keith said, because he seemed to have found his words again, "why you're still wearing this fucking thing." He reached around and tugged on Lance's towel, trying to pull it off, and Lance had some bad news for him, because that sure wasn't happening, not with how close they were pressed together.

"I was trying not to, ah, not to expose myself to people indecently." He moved just the barest inch so the towel could drop, and then kicked it somewhere in the direction of the bathtub.

"But I like you indecent," Keith said, as he worked a hand between them, and hey, he'd caught on to that lotion thing. "Why do people even wear clothes?"

Lance was sure there was a reason, but with Keith feeling him up, he was hard-pressed to remember it. He really couldn't do anything other than brokenly moan Keith's name into his shoulder and try hard not to come in two minutes like a teenager.

That second part was difficult—impossible, even, but Lance couldn't be pressed to feel bad about it, because Keith started fucking his hand even harder when Lance came between his thighs. Keith also started spitting out an impressive volley of curses when Lance tipped his head to press sloppy half-kisses to his shoulder, one thumb tracing the marks on Keith's hip while the other hand tightened around his cock.

Keith was quiet when he came, but only because he shoved a hand over his mouth. Lance worked him through it, petting his hair with his free hand because Keith didn't seem like the kind of person who would let Lance pet his hair any other time. Keith took a long time to find his breath again, and he reached up to hold his side while he did. Lance realized it was the place his gills would've been if he was in fish-form.

"You doing okay?" he asked, mouth still moving against Keith's neck, right over a lavender stripe.

"Mm. Fine. I'm fine. I'm. *Oh.*"

"Good, then I can bitch at you for coming on my sink. Seriously, Keith?" Lance snatched the towel off the ground to wipe off the mess. Keith laughed breathily and didn't apologize. He also didn't move out of the way. "Keith? Dude, scoot out the way, please, I'd like to clean that off before it dries," Lance said, wondering if orgasms felt different with a fish tail. Did Keith have a fish dick? *No, Lance, don't go there.*

"I... hah, give me a second. I don't know if my legs are gonna hold me up. They've never been shaky like this before."

He looked uncertain of himself, and it was pretty cute. Lance smiled and shook his head, reaching to clean up his own mess on the inside of Keith's thighs first, a hand on his side to steady him. "Sit here for a second?" he asked, and Keith perched on the edge of the bathtub while Lance cleaned off the sink, then chucked the towel on the floor in the general area of the laundry hamper. "I'm gonna go put new sheets and stuff on the bed," he explained, "you know, since you messed up the other ones with your fins... melting off, or whatever. And then, uh. Do you cuddle?"

"Not really," Keith said, stifling a yawn behind his hand. "But I can be convinced. I want to stay with you until Matt comes back, anyway."

Oh, right. Matt. Lance just dropped the blanket on top of the bed, figuring they were getting under it anyways. "Yeah, uh, is your... tail situation gonna be okay? With the, the rip in it and stuff?"

"What? Oh, yeah. I've been out of the water for long enough, should be fine."

Lance poked his head back in the bathroom door and narrowed his eyes at Keith. "So this wasn't an actual emergency."

"Maybe not as much of one as you thought it was," Keith said, standing and still looking a little wobbly as he followed Lance to the bedroom. He flopped on the bed right away, curling up on top of the blankets instead of under them.

"So... why make me drag your whole fish ass up here?" Lance, and, because he had a sense of human decency, he put some boxers on before laying down next to Keith.

Keith rolled over to face him, his hair flopping into his eyes. Lance guessed it didn't matter if his hair was that unruly if he was in the water all the time, because it'd just float out of his face, but it looked ridiculous when it started to dry. He didn't even think to stop himself before brushing Keith's hair out of his eyes, tucking it gently behind his ear.

"Because I wanted this."

"You wanted... this?" Lance's hand stayed on Keith's cheek, and he got a soft laugh in response to that.

"I just wanted the sex," he said. "But. I don't mind this, too."

Lance shifted closer, leaning in, and Keith stayed right where he was, eyes fixed on Lance, mouth parted like he was *waiting* for Lance to kiss him.

That was about when the door opened.

"Matt, are you—"

Lance screeched and backpedaled, yanking the blankets over himself even though he wasn't the one who'd decided to stay naked. Keith didn't move except to roll over and face the man who had walked in the door.

"—Keith, what the hell."

Oh, good, he knew Keith. Or was that bad? Lance couldn't tell. Keith seemed neutral. Keith didn't seem to have many facial expressions other than neutral and grumpy and the one he'd been wearing when Lance was touching his dick, though.

"Shiro, hey."

Shiro, who looked suspiciously like the dude in the picture on Matt's wall, was either looking away from Keith or on the tail end of an eye-roll; Lance

couldn't tell because he was busy grabbing a shirt and making himself as decent as possible. "I can't believe you."

"Uh, I'm pretty sure you can." Keith sat up, sitting just as shamelessly as he'd been when he first transformed. Maybe this actually was a mer-person thing.

"I *told* you not to fuck his lab assistant."

"Yeah, I took that as more of a suggestion."

"Wait, wait, what?" Lance said, pausing his search through his dresser for some shorts, "you knew about me?"

Shiro propped his hand on his hip and wow, he was even more ripped than Keith. "Yeah, Matt said he was getting an assistant, and Keith saw a picture of you with his sister."

Lance frowned, sure he was going red. "So you, you showed up on that beach to *seduce* me!?"

"Yeah, I sliced up my own tail just to get you in bed," Keith said, and then threw a pillow at him with enough accuracy and force to hit him square in the face. "No, dumbass, it was a coincidence. I didn't start seducing you or whatever until we got in the door."

"Keith, you're not supposed to seduce humans anyway," Shiro said, leaning against the doorframe and looking very much like he wanted to leave.

"Wait, are *you* not human, either?"

Shiro chuckled at his confusion, thumb rubbing over the scar on the bridge of his nose. "No, no, I'm not," he said, "I suppose my markings aren't as visible as Keith's, though."

"You're... also a merman?" Lance ventured.

"Well, yes."

Lance threw the pillow back at Keith. He missed, but the outrage was there. "You were fucking with me! He's wearing clothes! You said you people don't wear clothes!"

"Okay, no, I said I didn't *want* to wear them."

"Keith," Shiro said, giving him a stern look. Keith responded with a degree of insolence on his face Lance hadn't seen since his sister was a teenager. "Let's go, c'mon."

"Fine, fine." Keith stood, and it had Lance taking a staggering half-step forwards.

"Wait, wait! Are you... where are you going?" Lance asked, dropping his hands when he realized he'd reached for Keith a little.

"Uh. The ocean."

"Oh," Lance said, finding himself in the uncomfortable position of realizing suddenly that he'd just had a one-night stand, made worse by the fact that Shiro was still hovering in the doorway, looking steadily more anxious as he watched them. "You're just leaving, then? Or whatever?"

Keith stepped closer to him, settled his hands possessively on Lance's waist to pull him another step closer, until they were nearly chest-to-chest. "I'm not *leaving* leaving. I didn't put all this effort into seducing you to just go back underwater forever."

"Well, uh, good! You better come back here!" Lance was still acutely aware of Shiro watching them—no, actually, Shiro was shaking his head and looking pointedly away.

"I will. Also, you know where to find me," Keith said, leaning in to whisper in Lance's ear. "You should come by the beach soon. I could be convinced to haul my tail back onshore for this." That was about when Lance started shrieking, because Keith reached around to squeeze his ass.

Shiro finally dragged Keith out the door and Lance was left flushed and embarrassed and, to be honest, a little horny, standing in the middle of his bedroom trying to reconcile all of the day's bullshit. He was still not entirely convinced he hadn't slipped on the stairs to the cove and busted his head hard enough to have some really long hallucination. That sounded about right.

He was pretty sure it had all really happened, though, and he was also pretty sure he heard Matt's ATV rumbling up the driveway. Lance had some serious apologizing to do. Right before he interrogated Matt about fish dicks.

Matt forgave him. But not without a few dozen 'I told you so's.

The next few times Lance went to the beach, he took his sketchbook with him, because if he convinced himself he was just going to draw, it meant he wouldn't get disappointed if he didn't coincidentally run into Keith. He quickly realized that he got disappointed if he didn't see Keith anyway, but he got a lot of painting done.

Once, he headed down there early in the morning, before Matt was awake—except, he realized, Matt was definitely awake, because he was on the beach and also on top of Shiro. Lance suddenly felt enlightened about a few things.

One, Shiro was definitely a real live merman. It was weird to wrap his brain around, but somehow, Shiro looked more himself with a pair of gray-and-black fins instead of legs. Two, sex things were *definitely* still possible even with the tail, because Lance couldn't see much, but Matt was straddling Shiro and Shiro was pulling Matt down to kiss him over and over and Lance had *fucking called this*.

He also scrambled back up the stairs, because Matt was his boss and watching him make out with a dude was unprofessional, and also because Shiro put his hand in Matt's pants. Yeah, Lance wasn't sticking around to watch that. Even though it was probably gonna be real hot.

That night, Lance was mid-dream about some crazy fish fucking (gross. Gross? Gross.) when someone heavy landed on top of him in bed. That would have been enough to wake him up, but they also started poking him in the face, which was unnecessary and rude, and he peeled his eyes open, intending to tell them so. Instead, he just rasped out, "Keith?"

"What are you doing?" Keith asked. His eyes almost seemed to glow in the dark.

"Sleeping?"

Keith cocked his head to the side and proceeded to look no less confused. "What? No, not that. I haven't seen you again. Why not?"

Lance was starting to wake up slowly, and he realized after a while that Keith was naked again, which made him wonder if Keith had streaked all the way up from the coast. He was gonna go with probably, leaning toward absolutely.

"Dude, I went to the beach. You weren't there, and I'm not really sure how to look for you anywhere else without a boat!" Matt had a boat. It was at the marina in town, and Lance would've taken it out, but he hadn't exactly been able to ask Matt for the keys because Matt had been. Ahem. Busy.

"I was there this morning," Keith said. He still looked annoyed with Lance, but he was also sprawled across him, very naked between Lance's legs, only a blanket separating them. Lance wondered if he should start sleeping naked.

"Yeah, well, I did go out there this morning," Lance said, "I just didn't stick around because Matt and Shiro were busy screwing around up there. Like, Matt and I may have the world's chilliest professional relationship, but I don't wanna see his dick."

Keith frowned like that was an unsatisfactory excuse, but his pouty face was pretty cute. Really cute, actually. Lance scruffed a hand through Keith's hair and he just pouted even more, his bottom lip sticking out and everything. "Stop. I'm still mad at you."

"Aww, I'm sorry, babe," Lance said, not even a little bit sorry. "Lemme make it up to you?"

Lance leaned in and brushed his lips against Keith's like it was the easiest thing in the world, the affection as natural to him as breathing. He smiled, pulled away, and was met with the world's pissiest glare.

Apparently the fuzzy feelings weren't mutual.

Keith looked impressively angry, and it made Lance's blood go cold. Okay, that kiss had been a mistake.

Keith pushed himself up onto his forearms, putting distance between them. "What the hell was that?" Keith remained on top of him, either because he wasn't as angry as he looked, or because he forgot he had legs right now.

"I'm sorry!" Lance squeaked, "it was... it was just a reflex, and I thought you would like it, and, and I just kind of did it! Sorry!"

Keith's anger was slipping into confusion, and he spoke slowly, trying to placate Lance. "What... were you trying to do?"

"Uh. Kiss you?"

"Okay," Keith said, still forcing himself to sound calm, like Lance was a second from becoming hysterical, and honestly, Lance was. "What is that?"

"What's what?"

"Kiss. What's that?"

They wore matching incredulous looks, each just as confused by what the other was saying.

"You people... don't kiss?"

"Obviously, no," Keith said. "I thought you were going to *bite* me."

"Why the fuck would you think that!?"

"Because! You don't get that close to somebody with your mouth unless you're gonna bite them," Keith said. He was no longer meeting Lance's eyes, turned away and sheepish instead. "I thought... I thought you were mad at me for sneaking into your room at night and you were gonna, you know."

Lance realized Keith had been expecting the equivalent of a slap across the face from him, and he sat up, putting his arms around Keith's shoulders, hugging him close. "Sorry," he said again, "I didn't realize you... I guess it makes sense, now that I think about it." Can't really punch somebody underwater. Merpeople must've done most of their combat with those fangs.

"It's okay," Keith said, his voice muffled because he had his face buried in Lance's shoulder. His hands rested on Lance's waist, a lot more gentle than they'd been a couple days ago. Keith had missed him—no, Keith wasn't sure he was welcome here.

Lance stroked his back, thumbs delineating the curved markings around his shoulder blades. "Hey. Do you want me to show you how to kiss?"

When Keith tilted his head up, his face looked particularly pale in comparison to his hair, his dark eyes looking especially dreamy in the moonlight streaming through Lance's window. It really had him hoping Keith would say yes.

"Does it feel good?" he asked, and Lance understood the hesitation, what with the shark teeth and all, but he'd also be lying if he said he wasn't just a few minutes away from getting on his knees and begging Keith to kiss him.

"Yeah," he said, "yeah, it does, baby, I promise it'll be good."

"Okay then," Keith said, trying to sound flippant and missing the mark entirely. Lance didn't mind the nerves that snuck through, though, because his ego enjoyed the idea that Keith was nervous about his first kiss and needed Lance to take care of him.

Keith turned to face him, still close enough that he had to sit on Lance's lap, and Lance suddenly remembered Keith was, once again, really naked. He

ignored the part of himself that wanted to go straight for Keith's dick and put a hand in his hair instead, and found that it was softest at the nape of his neck. Keith's hair was dry, which meant he must've been out of the water for a while. Lance imagined him pacing around, trying to decide whether to sneak into the house.

Lance drew him into the first kiss slowly, doing little more than his previous failed attempt until he had a response from Keith, lips barely touching his. Keith breathed out through his nose but didn't pull away or freeze up. He let Lance kiss him again, a firmer press, still close-mouthed and chaste, and made a stifled noise in his chest, his mouth still shut. Keith stayed mannequin-still even when Lance sucked on his bottom lip, mouth parted and wet against Keith's. It was a little disturbing.

But when Lance pulled away to ask if he was doing okay, Keith followed, kissing him again, mouth finally moving against his, picking up on it way faster than Lance expected him to, what with not even knowing kissing was a thing until a few minutes ago. Keith was as intense with his kisses as he was with everything else, his mouth hot against Lance's, kissing him wetter and sloppier every second, shifting closer and closer on his lap.

They were in the perfect position for Lance to push Keith backwards and climb on top of him, but he had no idea if Keith was ready for that, or even if Keith was into this. Sure, he kissed like a horny teenager, but his sloppiness could've been entirely chalked up to inexperience.

He got his answer when Keith pulled away, giving Lance enough time to glance down between them and learn that Keith was definitely a little bit into this.

"You put your mouth on my shoulder last time," Keith said, "can you do that again?" He was already brushing his hair out of the way, baring one side of his neck, and Lance took a brief moment to apologize for what he said to the deity who put merpeople on this planet last time, and thanked them instead.

He didn't say anything, but he figured applying his mouth to Keith's trapezius was answer enough. Keith made a noise like a little sigh, and

Lance decided he wanted to hear it about a dozen more times. Lance traced the shape of the muscle up the side of Keith's neck, until he reached this space just below Keith's jaw that made him moan and tip his head back further to give Lance better access. Lance wasn't exactly sure if he was allowed to leave marks, but it'd be fine, okay, he wasn't sucking that hard. Keith's skin might have gone a bit pink but it'd fade by morning.

Keith got handsier the more Lance kissed him, feeling up his chest, stroking Lance's neck on the same place Lance was laying kisses on his own. He shivered as Keith scraped his fingernails gently over Lance's skin, leaving goosebumps on all Lance's little sensitive spots. He wondered if Keith was more hands-on because he didn't normally kiss, and found touching somebody like this more intimate than Lance did.

He lost that train of thought when Keith shrugged him away. "Let me," was all Lance got as a warning before Keith's mouth was on his neck, close to his throat, and he whined, clutching at Keith's biceps. He mirrored what Lance had done to him, following the places he'd been trailing his fingernails over Lance's neck, the compounding sensations driving Lance a little crazy.

"*Fuck*," Lance sighed, "you're good at this. How are you so good at this? You shouldn't be so—ah! So good, mm, don't stop."

Keith was much less gentle than Lance had been, which was a byproduct of him being sloppy and having much sharper teeth, and Lance knew he was gonna come away from this with some telltale scrapes collaring him. It only served to key Lance up even more, and he squirmed, trying to kick the blankets off his legs, wanting to get one step closer to getting rid of his boxers and getting on Keith and kissing him some more, further down his chest and his stomach, until—

Oh, that was a nice idea.

"Keith," Lance said, "hey."

Keith looked up, his mouth wet and Lance pulled him in again, because screw asking him about what they were doing next, Lance could just kiss

him all night long. Keith opened his mouth for Lance without hesitation this time, making pleased noises against his lips, one hand working down between them and *oh*, Lance liked the pressure of Keith's palm on his dick, and hey, didn't he have an idea back then?

"Keith, Keith," he said, between kisses because Keith didn't seem like he wanted to stop anytime soon. "Hey—mmph—hey, you wanna know where else I want to kiss you?"

"What, it's not going to be something weird, is it?"

"I dunno, depends on how weird you'd find a blowjob."

"A what."

Figures.

Lance maneuvered Keith onto his back pretty easily, but Keith grabbed his head when he started kissing his sternum, so he couldn't move down further. "Hey. Hey, let go, I wanna suck your dick."

"You want to *what* my dick?"

"Suck it," Lance said, "I'm gonna put it in my mouth—"

"No you're not."

"I'm not gonna *bite it*, Jesus! Look, I don't have big fuckin' teeth like you," Lance said, opening his mouth to demonstrate. Keith still looked dubious, but he didn't shut Lance down immediately, so he kept going. "I'm really good at this, I swear! Keith, I'm gonna make you feel so good, *please*, just let me go down on you."

Lance was pretty sure the typical argument about blowjobs didn't go like this. But he genuinely was good at it, and if Keith clearly hadn't ever had one before, and if he reacted as strongly to another new stimulus as he did kissing, it was gonna be *awesome*.

"Okay. But if you do something weird, I'll kick you off."

Lance had no doubts Keith meant that literally. "Okay," he said, "okay. Keith. You gotta let go of me, dude."

His hair stayed in unruly clumps when Keith let go of his head, relaxing, lying back on the bed for Lance. It took Lance a minute to do anything at all, because he was thrown by how *gorgeous* Keith was, spread out like a centerfold, his hands coming to rest over his head, a smirk on his face like he knew just how good he looked.

Those markings came even closer to Keith's dick than Lance thought, maybe a spare inch between the tapered ends and the base of his cock. It made his mouth water, like an instinct, like his body knew exactly what he wanted. "Fuck," he breathed, with feeling, "just. *Fuck*. You look so damn good." Lance could compete, though. He'd been told he looked pretty fucking hot with his mouth around somebody's dick, after all.

Lance started at one of the marks on Keith's hip, tracing the shape of it with his mouth, until the tip of it led him straight to the base of Keith's cock. He heard Keith let out a gentle breath as he kissed his way to the tip of his cock, flattening his tongue out over the head.

"You still think it's weird?" Lance asked, grinning up at him.

"Yes. But keep going. Maybe you'll convince me."

"Okay," Lance said, and then readjusted himself and banged his foot against the headboard. This really didn't work with Keith backwards, and all. "Motherfucker. Okay, new plan: you sit against the headboard, I'll be... down here."

"Yeah," Keith said, shuffling around and rearranging himself at the head of the bed, laying back against Lance's pillows. He looked like some kind of prince of the ocean, moonlight incarnate, a divine being who, if mythology was to be believed, was probably going to fuck Lance over, but he didn't care.

Lance lay flat on his stomach between Keith's legs, propped up on one elbow, his opposite hand around Keith's cock, tongue tracing along it. He hadn't put it in his mouth, yet, worried that Keith would freak out or nail

him in the throat or something, intending to get Keith nice and relaxed just like this before he tried to actually suck him.

He wasn't expecting Keith to taste different. When he had legs, Keith looked completely human until he opened his mouth—maybe some strange tattoos, yeah, but it was easy to forget he was another species entirely. When the light coming from the full moon through the open window hit his eyes, though, they reflected yellow-green like a cat's.

Lance couldn't describe exactly what made Keith's cock taste so different, but then again, his palate was, in Hunk's words, "just absolutely useless." Hunk had, of course, been talking about wine-tasting when he said that, which had nothing to do with the taste of somebody's pre-come, but Lance found it relevant anyway. All he could determine without further thought on the matter—and he didn't want to think about it anymore—was that it was saltier.

Keith was breathing heavier, now, his fingers dragging furrows into Lance's pillows. From cheeks to chest, his skin was lit up with a blush, his lower lip particularly red, because he'd been sucking on it.

"I'm gonna put it in my mouth now," Lance warned, leaning heavy enough on one of Keith's thighs that he was pinned there as he sucked on the head, waiting for a reaction before lowering down further.

He got one, alright. A high-pitched wail that was loud enough for Lance to hope to god Matt was the world's heaviest sleeper. Oh well. Matt probably deserved it for that morning.

Lance went slow, even though he *could* have taken Keith all the way to the base in one if he wanted to. Keith didn't keep making noise, no, he went absolutely quiet except for his breathing, which made the sound of Lance's mouth around his cock the loudest thing in the room. It was dirty as fuck, and it had Lance making all kind of little cut-off moans around Keith's dick.

He found himself kind of wanting to get another of those noises out of Keith's mouth, and he did, easily, the first time he took Keith's dick all the way to his throat and swallowed around it, easing off just after, because it

felt weird as hell to have something still in his throat after swallowing, and it always took him a while to get used to that.

“Yeah?” he asked, remembering how much he liked the way his voice got all gravelly when he did this.

“Yeah,” Keith agreed, “do it again.”

He did, and this time, the noise Keith made was muffled, because he had a hand clapped over his mouth. His face was tilted down so he could watch Lance, and Lance put on a hell of a show, winking up at him, pulling off once so that Keith could see how wet his mouth was. That one had Keith’s thighs clasp around his shoulders. Lance kept leaning on one, because he was pretty sure Keith could crush his head with those—apparently, the muscular definition in his tail translated to killer quads.

Lance’s jaw was sore as hell, but he wasn’t gonna quit this until Keith came in his mouth, or on his face, or just in the general vicinity of his mouth. He pulled off to take a breather, working Keith over with his tongue for a few seconds, and before he went back down, he sucked a finger into his mouth so it was slippery and wet when he dragged it over Keith’s asshole.

He timed it pretty damn well, so the head of Keith’s cock hit his throat just as he pressed his middle finger against Keith’s rim. Not in, they couldn’t do that without taking a quick trip to the drawer next to Lance’s bed, but Lance was pretty sure they didn’t need to, because Keith was honest-to-god screaming behind his hand. Lance swallowed around him over and over, and shit, he was gonna have to make himself some tea or something, his throat was gonna be so sore. Keith’s hand grasped Lance’s on his thigh, nails scraping the back of his wrist a little, and Lance’s throat went hot as Keith’s come spilled into his mouth. He rocked his hips against the blankets, just to take the edge off, because holy *shit*, that was such a fucking turn-on. He couldn’t remember the last time he was this hard.

He swallowed and pulled off, giving Keith the most self-satisfied smile he could manage. Keith looked fucking wrecked, his hair damp at his temples with sweat, hickies on his neck even though Lance had tried not to mark him up. He was still flushed all the way through, his spent cock against his

hip, Lance's spit dripping down to his balls, legs spread wide like he'd either forgotten to pull them closed or didn't care. He was a fucking mess.

"So. You liked it?" Lance swallowed again, trying to get rid of both the itch in his throat and the residual taste of Keith's come. It was weird, kind of funky, more salty and sour than a human's would've been.

"I... yes," Keith said, shutting his eyes, tipping his head toward the ceiling. "That was something. You, uh. You'll have to do that to me again."

"Yeah, hope you don't mean tonight, because I don't wanna have to explain to Matt why I lost my voice."

Keith gestured weakly between his legs and said, "do I *look* like I could go again tonight?"

"Yeah, no, I don't think that's gonna be a thing," Lance said, hand around his cock because come on, Keith looked too good not to jerk off to. Plus, he was pretty sure Keith didn't mind.

Keith shifted a little, reaching for him, fingertips brushing Lance's thigh. "Hey. You're still...?"

"I mean, yeah, I did get real close to just coming on the bedsheets and having to wash them twice in like, a week, but no. I'm still, uh."

Keith's hand rested over his on his cock, not really touching him, just feeling him touch himself. "Do you want me to, I don't know, do something?"

Well, Lance sure as hell wasn't gonna let Keith blow him, because he actually might get his dick bitten off. He paused for a moment, moving further up the bed and straddling Keith's waist, until he was balanced just over Keith's stomach. "You don't have to do shit unless you want to," Lance said, "I could, uh. I could just get myself off like this."

It wouldn't take long. Minutes, maybe seconds, if Keith got in on the action.

Keith sighed. "You're going to get it on my chest, aren't you?"

“You’re easier to clean up than the entire bed is,” Lance reasoned. Also, he kind of wanted to see that.

Keith fixed him with a stare, eyes reflecting moonlight again, and batted Lance’s hand out of the way, replacing it with his own. “Fine, then. Come for me.”

It took seconds. Possibly a single-digit number of seconds. And it was *loud*, god. The things Keith did to him.

Lance was almost one-hundred percent sure they’d woken Matt up, and he felt a little guilty about it, but Keith was laid out in bed next to him, somehow managing to look ethereal even though he was wearing Lance’s come.

Keith tensed for a second when Lance leaned in to kiss him, like he didn’t realize it was a thing you could do after sex, too, but when he remembered what Lance was doing, and that he liked it, he relaxed, one hand on Lance’s nape to keep him close. He opened his mouth for Lance, but moved slow, like he was trying to figure out how to do it again.

After a long moment, Keith leaned away, looking fuzzy-eyed. “I feel...” he began, lips brushing Lance’s as he spoke.

“Yeah?”

“I feel really gross.”

“Oh. You wanna shower? I have a shower.”

“A what?”

He had to show Keith how the shower worked, because apparently Keith hadn’t ever been in a bathroom before, except for that time he was jerking Lance off in one, and that certainly didn’t count as educational.

It was comfortable, Lance thought, curling up on his bed with the sound of the shower running in the background, the blankets warm from his and Keith’s body heat. He fell asleep before Keith returned to the bed.

When Lance woke, he realized he had no idea whether Keith came back to bed at all. It was entirely possible he showered and then walked right out the front door and back to the ocean, because Lance couldn't recall Keith sleeping next to him at all. It hurt a little, and he curled up into a ball under his blankets to pout for a while, until it got too hot and he had to extract himself.

He stumbled into the bathroom and squinted at the mirror, fingers tracing the marks on his neck. Keith had really done a number on him. He had patterns of little red lines in the shape of Keith's teeth decorating his skin, all of them high enough that they'd show over the collar of a T-shirt.

They were kind of admirable, as hickeys went, he thought. He leaned in, fingers brushing a particularly dark one that had some bruising around the red marks, tilting his head to get a better look. They'd heal up fine, he was pretty sure, but he sort of wished he had something to cover them with.

Lance was so distracted by his love bites, he didn't notice anybody walk into the room until a wolf-whistle made him jump, smacking his hip into the edge of the sink.

"Ow, shit!" Lance hissed, grabbing his side where he'd banged it on the sink and then glaring across the room at Matt, who was grinning, eyes crinkled up at the corners.

"Keith really did a number on you, huh?" he said, leaning against the doorframe, wearing an enormous T-shirt that was either his pajamas, or borrowed from Shiro.

"Fuck! Dude, did you even knock!?"

"Door was open," Matt said. He shrugged, head turning so he could examine the bed behind him. "He's gone?"

Lance had so many questions. And, because he was Lance, they all came spilling out at once, his voice getting higher and higher with each. "And so

you just *walked in*? How did you know it was Keith, anyway!? What are you even doing in my room!”

Matt took a step back, laughing nervously. “Sorry, man, I’ll go, just wanted to see if you wanted breakfast before we get started today.”

“Oh. Yeah, actually. That’s... sorry, I just freaked out on you. I wasn’t expecting...” He sighed. “I don’t know what I was expecting.”

“Keith’s probably just back in the ocean,” Matt said, somehow hitting exactly what Lance had been worried about.

“Yeah, I guess. I just think... I think he left right after.” Lance started washing his face, because he’d be damned if getting the post-sex ditch ruined his morning routine. Matt walked to the opposite wall, leaning his elbow on the windowsill and looking out at the beach below.

“I mean, he probably doesn’t feel right staying out of the ocean for that long,” Matt said, “they’re kind of superstitious about it.”

“Really?” Lance said, muffled, as he towed his face dry.

“Yeah. Shiro told me there’s some kind of legend among their people about a man who left the ocean because he fell in love with a human woman, and he lived inland with her for years,” Matt said. “Supposedly, when he returned, his fins didn’t grow again, and he could never return to his home or his people. It’s kinda a cautionary tale.”

“Okay,” Lance said, crossing the room so he could rifle through his drawers for something suitable to wear, “but that’s *years*. I’m talking like, eight hours.”

“Again, it’s a superstition,” Matt said, back to Lance as he pulled on a clean T-shirt. “Shiro stays the night sometimes, so I know they *can*. Keith’s probably just nervous, or something.”

“Or something.” Lance paused, looking over Matt’s shoulder, like he’d even be able to see Keith out there. “Do you think it’s real? The legend? I mean,

you study them. Could they really turn all the way human?"

Matt frowned, considering. "I never thought so," he said, "it seems like it's just a legend. But I never had a reason to... I mean, Shiro's sense of duty to his people is kind of. Well. He's not going to leave them for me. But I'm also here to stay for the time being, so it's gonna be a while before I have to think about it."

Lance wasn't even gonna be there to stay for another three months.

"It's fine," he said, "I mean, it's just a summer fling, right? It's fine."

"Sure, Lance, I guess so."

He didn't think Matt believed him. He certainly didn't believe himself.

Lance caught Keith again the following evening, perched on one of the boulders jutting out of the sea, like the VHS cover for the Little Mermaid, sunset behind him and everything. Lance kicked off his sandals waded in up to his knees, thinking he should've worn swim trunks for this. Oh, fuck it, his shorts could handle a little water. He splashed forward until the water dampened the hem of his shirt, and Keith turned upon hearing him, and smiled in a way that might've been sweet on somebody with less fangs. As it were, he looked vicious.

As Keith dropped off the boulder and into the sea, Lance tossed his shirt in the direction of the shore and waded in further, meeting Keith when he was chest-deep in the water. Keith put his arms around Lance's shoulders, the incoming tide pushing him the slightest bit closer to Lance.

"Hey," Lance said, holding Keith close so the waves couldn't pull him away, "you were easy to find this time."

"I tried to be," Keith said, "I didn't want you to think I was ditching you."

"I didn't think..." Lance paused, hands settling at the small of Keith's back, just above his dorsal fin. "Okay, I thought you were, a little bit."

"I'm sorry," Keith said, leaning his forehead against Lance's, "I'm just kind of... I can't stay out of the water too long, it's like... a whole thing."

"Yeah, Matt told me."

"Oh? Because you were freaking out?" Keith asked, his grin looking more impish than usual. "Because you *missed* me?"

Lance's hand cut through the water as he splashed Keith in the face, to almost no effect. Keith might've honestly leaned into it, and Lance realized it wasn't quite the right tactic by the time Keith retaliated, a hand on his head, dunking him under the water.

It was a ridiculous fight, the two of them trying to pull each other under and Keith remaining completely unbothered by it, but in a way, it reminded Lance of his brothers tackling him in the pool, grabbing his legs out from under him and splashing him until he gave in and fought back.

With Keith, it was different. The water was shallow enough that Lance wasn't underwater for long, but Keith easily knocked him off his feet, dragging him back under like he was as dangerous a siren as he looked. Lance couldn't keep his eyes open in the saltwater like Keith could, so he grabbed blindly for Keith, getting a handful of slippery tail. Keith escaped easily, twisting out of his grasp, and Lance breached the surface of the water, shaking his wet hair out of his eyes. Keith was still under the water; Lance could see his tail cutting through it at intervals, a flash of scales breaking the surface and then slipping back under. Circling him like a shark.

Lance lifted his hands, waiting on a moment to strike. Keith's glittering scales flashed before him again, and he grabbed at him, catching Keith around the waist, hands firm on his tail to keep him from wriggling away again.

Keith turned in his arms, forcing his head above the surface of the water, grabbing Lance's shoulder like he was trying to unbalance him, but Lance stood firm, readjusting his grip on Keith's tail so he couldn't move.

He was expect Keith to fight him back, splash him in the face or something, but instead, Keith went limp in his arms, head tipping back until he almost dropped into the water again as he moaned.

Lance realized he had one hand pressed to the center of Keith's fin, just below the end of the purple marks curving around his hips. Exactly where his dick would be. He probably should've snatched his hand away and apologized, but instead, he pressed down harder, running his fingertips in little circles. Keith's tail thrashed, spraying water up the side of Lance's face, and his hand curled on Lance's shoulder, his short nails digging in.

"Fuck, Lance! You can't just *do that to somebody, god!*"

This time, Lance did remove his hands, and he would've just dropped Keith back in the water if Keith wasn't clinging to him stubbornly. "Sorry! Was that not, uh, good?"

"I mean, I just wasn't expecting you to—to just *grope* me like that."

"Dude, I don't even know what the hell I was groping, it's just all fins and stuff, it's not like you've got a dick right there."

Keith leveled him with a flat look. "No, it's exactly like that!" he said, "just because it's internal in this form doesn't mean—*did you just think I didn't have a dick?*"

"Uh. No?"

Kinda, yeah, he did think that.

"You totally did."

"I tried not to think about it," Lance said, honestly, his arms going around Keith again, holding him close to his chest.

Keith frowned. "Why? Because it grosses you out?"

"Um, nope," Lance said, "more because I was afraid I'd be really into it."

“Why would you be afraid of that?” Keith asked. His tail was winding around one of Lance’s legs, pulling them even closer.

“I mean, it’s not really a normal thing for, uh, regular humans to be into. Fish dicks, that is.”

“It doesn’t look like a—okay, I don’t know what a fish’s dick looks like, but I’m pretty sure it doesn’t look like that,” Keith said, and Lance realized that even the very tip of his tail was pretty strong, because Keith managed to sweep his feet out from under him until he was floating, pushed back toward the shore by the gentle waves.

Lance laughed as he washed up onshore with an armful of Keith, who seemed bigger, somehow, more all-encompassing when he was in his element like this. Like the sea was just an extension of him, and if he wanted, he could drag Lance under and surround him with himself.

Keith seemed to be doing a pretty good job of surrounding him even with Lance above the surface of the water, kissing him until both their mouths tasted like saltwater. “You wanna see it?” Keith asked, voice low, as he pulled away, and it took Lance a second to realize what he was talking about.

When he did, though, it was enough to ignore the fact that his entire backside was plastered with wet sand, and yep, some of that was definitely going down his shorts.

“Yes,” he managed, still close enough to Keith that he could punctuate it by nipping Keith’s bottom lip. “Yeah, I wanna do more than see it, man.”

Keith laughed as he shifted onto his side, laying in Lance’s lap as another wave washed over them. “Okay, then start touching me again,” he said.

His tail draped in a loose zig-zag over Lance’s legs, and it looked more like it belonged to some kind of eel than a fish. He started slower this time, petting over Keith’s hip, getting more of a feel for the texture of his scales. They were smooth like worn-down sea glass, and the feel of Keith’s skin reminded him of a giant snake. Lance could feel the shapes of an alien

muscular structure beneath his hands, and those muscles flexed as Keith's tail moved absently over Lance's legs, like he couldn't help it.

The waves continued to break in the distance, washing over the two of them, which didn't seem to deter Keith in the slightest. He started to kiss Lance's neck, lips softer over the red marks he'd left the night before. Lance stroked his palm over the center of Keith's tail, fingertips blindly fumbling for the spot he'd found by such an easy accident last time.

"Higher," Keith said, fingers going around his wrist to direct him. "Yeah, there," he said, when Lance's fingertips were at the same position they'd been before, right where Keith's dick would've been—was.

The area under Lance's fingers was covered in smaller scales than Keith's back, and his skin was a little looser right here, a slit parting across it when Lance touched him long enough. Lance looked down, wondering at Keith's anatomy, which still didn't look very much like a dick at all.

Lance's fingers were framing an opening that was a couple inches long, pale like the rest of Keith's belly, but a deep purple-red inside. Lance stroked his thumb across the inside part, and Keith made a pitchy noise in the back of his throat. The area just under his slit swelled a little, like he had an actual bulge, or something, and Lance realized fuck, he definitely did.

Without much more coaxing, the head of Keith's cock poked out of the slit, looking almost the same as it usually did—although, Lance supposed this was the usual for Keith. It was tinged a little more purple, but then again, so was all of Keith's skin. Lance touched the head, pinching it gently between his thumb and forefinger, his own thighs squeezing around Keith's tail as he rubbed himself against Keith, hard as hell in his soaked-through shorts and boxers.

Something must've been doing it good for Keith, because Lance suddenly ended up with a lot more dick in his hand as the rest of it slid out of him faster than Lance was expecting. This part wasn't as human, the sides of it ridged, the base so wide Lance couldn't circle it with his hand.

“Holy shit,” he said, “you’re bigger like this.” Probably a good four inches longer, but Lance wasn’t counting.

“Yeah, I know,” Keith said, his face still pressed to Lance’s shoulder, breathing hard. Lance could feel his gills flaring, tickling his ribs a little where his side was pressed to Keith’s.

“Like, way bigger,” Lance said, squeezing the base of his cock, and Keith’s tail twisted in the surf, spraying seafoam over the both of them. “Oh, you like that?”

”*Lance*,” Keith groaned, sagging against him, the end of his tail curling around Lance’s ankle. “Please. Quit teasing me.”

“I’m not teasing, I’m just figuring this thing out,” Lance said, gently running his fingers over the ridges, and Keith whined, his hands scrabbling in the sand. So, Lance did it again.

Keith wasn’t about to be outdone, nope, he gave as good as he got, the muscles in his tail coiling up, rubbing the whole thing against Lance’s crotch, which had him digging in his heels and thrusting against it. He tightened his hand around Keith’s cock and pulled up in one slow stroke, not sure if there was pre-come collected on the head or if it was just wet because, well, water.

“’S weird,” Keith said, “doing this above the surface.”

“Yeah, well, I don’t think I can hold my breath that long,” Lance said, crossing one ankle over the other, pressing himself as close as he could to Keith’s tail. He couldn’t really grind or his wet shorts would turn into a nightmare of chafing, but the pressure was nice. Plus, Keith’s tail was curled all the way around, so it was pressed against his balls and his ass too, and that was a unique sensation Lance didn’t think he minded.

As Lance continued stroking Keith’s cock, his fingers slipped through something that felt like a whole lot more than just pre-come, and he looked up, because did he just—

Nope. Keith looked relatively the same; Lance would've known if he'd come because he was steadily getting used to what post-orgasm Keith looked like. All things considered, it made sense that Keith's cock did... well, this, because they probably didn't have lube underwater.

Keith seemed to really like when Lance gripped the bottom of his cock, if the way he kept moaning and grabbing Lance's sides and chest was any indication. He got both hands on Keith, one squeezing the base of his dick, the other stroking him, and Keith dropped against him, boneless, pushing both of them into the sand. "That's so good," he said, his voice rasping, gills fluttering open again. "Don't stop."

Lance obeyed, speeding up his pace now that he'd gotten over the novelty of the thing. The tide receded just enough, and now the water only washed over his legs from the knees down and the end of Keith's tail. Now that it was no longer getting washed away, Keith's pre-come (or whatever the hell it was) started to puddle on Lance's belly, slicking Keith's cock so the slide of Lance's hand over him felt like the most natural thing in the world.

Keith thrust into his touches, which meant his tail slid between Lance's legs again, and Lance threw his head back, effectively getting sand all the fuck up in his hair. He took one hand off of Keith for just a second, long enough to shove his shorts open, because yes, fine, grinding himself against a scaly fish tail was gonna be weird as fuck but none of him minded anymore.

And, actually, it wasn't that weird. On a scale of weird shit Lance had done in bed (or on the beach—this wouldn't be the first time) it was probably near the top, but it wasn't the worst. Keith's tail was warm; he wasn't endothermic or anything, Lance had known that. The scales on the underside of his tail were smaller, and his skin almost felt human, except that it wasn't a human limb at all. Lance rubbed some of the slick from Keith's cock over his own, and then the slide was even better.

The end of Keith's tail curled tighter around Lance's leg, and he wasn't sure if it was on purpose, but it spread his legs wider, so he had to roll his hips to grind himself against Keith, which felt even more obscene. Lance wondered what would happen if somebody walked in on them like he'd come across Matt and Shiro a couple days back. This would be so much worse, because

everything was just laid out there, Keith twisted in his lap so that he could lay on his side and keep his cock within Lance's reach. Lance really wouldn't appreciate somebody wandering up when Keith had his dick out *again*. And Lance wasn't much better, not with his hand around Keith's cock and his shorts visibly pushed down and god, he should've gotten way more freaked out by that concept.

Instead, he nudged at Keith until his mouth was next to Keith's ear. "What do you think would happen if somebody found us out here?"

"Well, it'd probably be Matt and Shiro, so, nothing good."

"Fuck. That ruins the fantasy, Keith," Lance said, fingers leaving Keith's dick to trace through the puddle on his stomach that was entirely Keith's fault. He brought the tips of his fingers to his mouth and licked them off—yeah, definitely tasted like Keith's weird-ass come.

Keith seemed deeply interested in what Lance was doing with his mouth, his purple eyes glued on Lance's fingers, one of his fangs digging into his lower lip.

That was right about when Lance got another dumb idea. "Hey," he said, "do you think there's enough of this to actually get things lubed up enough so you can fuck me?"

Keith whined high enough to border on the ultrasonic, and he pulled Lance in to kiss him, licking his lips like he was trying to taste himself on them. "I don't—I'm not sure," he said. "I don't really... know how that works."

"What do you mean you don't know how that works?"

"God, Lance, it's not like I can bottom like this. And you *know* you're the only human I've ever been with, and I'm not interested in women, so. I don't know how it works, no."

"Well," Lance said, attempting to roll them and failing, because Keith was heavier like this, "lemme up, so I can give you a demonstration."

Lance stripped out of his shorts and chucked them in the direction of his T-shirt, having fully given up. If somebody wandered out here, they were already gonna catch him having sex, so who cared how clothed he was for it?

Plus, Lance had on good authority that Matt and Shiro were gonna be pretty busy at the house, anyway.

Lance straddled Keith's tail, planting both knees in the sand on either side of him, brushing his hands off on his thighs. Keith writhed under him, propped himself up on his elbows so he could look at Lance. It was almost the same position he'd been in the first time Lance had seen him on this beach, except instead of looking pissed and unruly, he was flushed, his mouth dropped open, eyes gone so dark they were almost black. Even if you didn't look at his dick standing hard between them, Keith looked crazy horny.

And there was definitely enough slick on his cock for this to happen. Lance coated his fingers in it, rubbed it between them, analyzing the texture. It didn't feel quite as sticky as silicone sometimes did, and if it held up long enough, Lance might've just found the best lube ever.

"What's taking you so long?" Keith asked, impatiently flicking water at Lance's back with his tail.

"Chill!" Lance hissed, hand between his thighs, sinking down onto his middle finger, "I gotta get ready and all that shit first."

"Get ready?" Keith asked, and wow, god, he really didn't know anything about bottoming, did he?

"Yeah," Lance said, "you wanna help?"

"Help?"

"Yeah, like, put your fingers up my—oh, right, fuck, your hands are all sandy," Lance said, punctuating it with a little sigh because he'd added a second finger and the stretch was reminding him that it'd been a while since

he'd done this and yeah, there was no way he was gonna be able to take Keith's entire dick. Definitely not the part that was like the width of his wrist.

"Yeah, they're all sandy," Keith said, still irritated, if the way his tail was swishing through the water behind Lance was any indication, "so I can't even touch myself. Sex on the beach is terrible."

"Nah, it's kinda hot." Inconvenient as it may have been, Lance was hard-pressed to forget the romantic side of things, especially when the sun was almost finished setting behind them, and everything was bathed in pink and red and it made Keith's eyes reflect them like little mirrors of the sunset.

"Lance," Keith whined, breathing harder now that his gills were firmly shut to keep sand from getting in them, "please."

"Hang on, it's been a while, Jesus," Lance said, but he was close to ready, close enough, at least, and he scooted up until he was positioned right over Keith's cock. He breathed out slow, taking the base of Keith's cock in hand, and then shifted until it was just barely pressed against him. Keith couldn't keep his hands off Lance anymore, grabbing his knees tight enough to rub the grit of sand into them, and Lance dropped down an inch or so, fitting the head of Keith's cock into himself.

He sank down slow, pacing himself, and from the look on Keith's face, it wasn't a bad thing. Lance was a thousand percent sure that if he hadn't, Keith would've already come. He couldn't get all of it in him, because Keith was too thick at the base and too long overall, but Lance could feel three distinct ridges on Keith's cock press into him one after the other, and, when he pulled up, they flared a little as they slid out, stretching him wider than they did on entrance.

Lance tried real hard to shut off the biologist part of his mind that was sure the reason Keith's cock was ridged like that was to, uh, keep him inside his partner. It didn't feel too weird, but that was probably because it reminded Lance of that time he decided to try anal beads, and yeah, he hadn't ever planned on reliving that, but he didn't *mind* it.

Because Keith's cock didn't have much of a curve to it, Lance had to lean back to get the angle right, but when it did, it had his toes curling as another wave lapped over his feet and calves. He could hear Keith's tail moving in the water behind him, probably those same uncontrollable twisting motions. Lance wondered if when Keith was with somebody else of his species, their tails would curl around each other.

Keith had no knees, and therefore little leverage to thrust up into Lance, but he tried, his tail lifting and lowering, ribboning out behind them, fins splayed on the wet sand and almost disappearing, translucent purple shapes against the beach. He was beautiful like this. As his abs clenched, the markings on his hips shifted where his skin pulled tight, and the ones on his face accentuated the way his head was thrown back, dark stripes delineating the smooth length of his neck. Lance touched them, a hot palm tracing over the side of Keith's neck and up his cheek, curling in his hair for a second.

When Lance finally got Keith at the right angle, he dropped a little deeper than expected, which shoved a fourth ridge into him, and he let out a moan that was edging toward a shout, because fuck, that one was *thick*. Keith's mouth was open, throat moving like he was crying out, but Lance couldn't hear a sound. He remembered that Keith could reach pitches humans weren't capable of hearing. And he grinned, because it meant he was making Keith *scream*.

Lance circled his hips, trying to get another one of those out of him, but he didn't even notice if he had, because he nailed himself in the prostate so hard his eyes rolled shut, and he dropped forward, bracing his hands on Keith's shoulders to keep himself steady.

"God," he cried, voice choked, doing it again because if there was one thing Lance didn't know how to do, it was quit. "That's so good, Keith, fuck, you feel so..."

"So?" Keith asked, barely following the conversation, his voice slurring further as he forgot how to work to keep his lips from passing over his fangs while he spoke.

“So... fucking weird, honestly, but—“ Lance lifted up again, heard a distinct slick sound as the ridges of Keith’s dick slipped out of him, “—oh, shit, I kind of love it.”

He swore Keith’s cock was still leaking inside him, spilling more lubricant and easing Lance’s up-and-down as he bounced himself on Keith’s cock a couple times and then decided the rhythm wasn’t fast enough.

Lance planted one hand on Keith’s chest, wrapped his other around his own cock, and rode Keith for all he was worth, uncomfortable explanations of sudden soreness tomorrow be damned. At this speed, he couldn’t get quite as far down on Keith’s cock with each rock of his hips, but it was clearly still doing it for Keith, because he was holding Lance’s shoulders and groping his chest, touching him like he wanted to drag him closer, but knew that the position wasn’t gonna allow it.

“Are you supposed to be... it feels like there’s a lot of, uh. I know it’s not come, technically, but...”

“Yeah,” Keith said. “It’s fine. Fine. I’m just.” He tucked his chin into his chest and moaned long and loud, as Lance slowed enough to work more of Keith’s cock into him. “I’m just really fucking horny, Lance, it’s fine.”

“Oh, so I should take it as a compliment?” he said, laughing breathlessly.

“Yeah. Sure, whatever. Keep doing that, you’re gonna make me come.”

Lance started taking him in long, slow strokes again, and even though it was off-tempo with the frantic pace he was jerking himself off with, it sure was doing it for him, too. He felt himself tighten around Keith in pulses, and clearly Keith felt it too, because he started going ultrasonic again, fingernails digging distinct marks into Lance’s thighs.

“You’re so fucking close, aren’t you,” Lance said.

Keith just wailed again, only barely within Lance’s range of hearing this time.

“Yeah, you are.”

”*Lance.*” Keith pressed a hand over Lance’s on his chest, fingertips digging at the sides, squeezing it so tight Lance felt like his knuckles were pressing closer together than they should’ve been.

“It’s okay,” he said, “I’m gonna—I’m gonna, too. It’s alright, you can—“

Keith clearly didn’t need more encouragement, because Lance felt the hot rush of Keith coming inside him, filling him up more than a human could, and Lance was sort of disturbed by how much that turned him on.

Instead, he figured, fuck it, and started stroking himself faster, until he came on Keith’s stomach, his free hand pressed to his mouth so he didn’t scream loud enough to make someone come running.

Keith pulled him closer after, yanking on his arms hard enough that Lance couldn’t have resisted—not that he wanted to, and kissed him, slow and soft enough that Lance was startled by the contrast to all the wild sex they’d been having.

“That,” Lance said, kissing Keith again before continuing, “was officially the craziest thing I’ve ever done.”

When he walked back into the house, Matt busted out laughing. And sure, Lance wearing shorts that were dripping all over the floors, and his hair was full of sand and sticking up in every direction, like a neon sign that said “THIS IS SEX HAIR.” Not that he needed one. The fresh marks Keith had left on his neck were enough of an indicator. As was the fact that he was walking funny—and not just because of the soaking wet shorts.

Okay, maybe Matt's laughter was deserved.

Of course, Matt and Shiro were sitting on the living room couch, Matt’s legs over Shiro’s lap, cuddling like they were the picture of innocence and had absolutely not gotten up to the exact same thing a couple days ago.

“Hey, Lance,” Matt said, the scar on his cheek pulling with his shit-eating grin. “Have fun at the beach?”

Lance flipped him off all the way to his bedroom.

— — —

Lance didn’t see Keith for a solid week after—not the fault of either of them, but because Lance and Matt’s research projects all needed to be finished at once, and the two of them spent a good five days crammed into the lab together. When they finally got all the data sent off to Matt’s parent lab, Lance ran straight for the beach, because it had been *too long*. Long enough that Lance knew every word on Matt’s favorite playlist, and also knew that Matt’s taste in music kinda sucked.

He grabbed his sketchbook on the way out, because he needed some stress relief, and if Keith wasn’t at the beach, he’d take the next best thing.

He did find Keith, who pulled himself onto the beach, which looked just as awkward as Lance imagined it would, and then demanded to see Lance’s sketches. Lance flipped through them slowly, pausing whenever Keith made a sound, and let him linger on whatever page had caught his attention. Keith seemed especially interested in Lance’s drawings of the local wildlife—usually of specimens they had in the fish tanks in the lab.

“These are really accurate,” Keith said. “You should do a study of one of us sometime. You know, for documentation.”

Lance supposed a life drawing of a mer-person would be a little more scientifically valuable than Matt’s slightly-blurry polaroids of him and Shiro. He flipped to a blank page, tugging his pencil out of his back pocket. “I’ll draw you, then. For science.”

Keith gave him a sour look, like he hadn’t considered the fact that this would require him to pose like one of Lance’s French girls. “Should I...”

“Just stay there, you don’t have to be completely still or anything.” God knows the angelfish he’d been drawing the other day hadn’t been.

Keith adjusted himself a little, laying on his stomach, arms propped up on his elbows. He shifted his tail until his fins were splayed as wide as they could be, giving Lance a pretty clear picture of his anatomy. Lance, however, was more distracted by the way Keith tilting his head down made his eyelashes look thicker and the slope of his nose softer.

Keith seemed to relax the longer Lance sketched him, playing absently with a broken clamshell that had been buried in the sand next to him. He still seemed tentative, though, and when he finally spoke, Lance figured out why.

"Matt says you're temporary," he said, flipping the shell over in his hands again.

"Well, yeah. I'm just an intern," Lance explained, mapping out the curves of Keith's fins. "At the end of the summer, I have to go back to school and finish my senior year."

Keith frowned. "So. I'm not gonna see you again."

Lance stopped and took a breath. "I mean, I'd *like* to come back after I graduate, but that'll only happen if Matt's parent lab is willing to pay for him to have a full-time lab assistant." Matt thought that they would, since he and Lance had been getting more work done than expected, and he'd already offered Lance the position if it became available. "Everything's kind of up in the air right now, though."

Keith hummed, like he was trying to sound neutral but was frustrated, reaching for Lance's bag. He dug through it until he found the little plastic tub of sliced-up mango Lance had brought with him. It was partially for Keith anyway, because Keith liked eating human food, so he didn't mind when Keith pried it open and shoved a piece in his mouth, except that he knew Keith was doing it so he didn't have to verbally respond to anything Lance said.

"I want to come back so bad," Lance said, uncharacteristically quiet. He continued to sketch, focusing more on Keith's tail than his face. "I'm gonna miss you."

“Good,” Keith said, holding onto a piece of fruit too long, the juice from it dripping down his wrist, “I didn’t wanna be the only one.”

Lance set his sketchbook down and reached for Keith’s forearm, pulling it to his lips to lick the yellow-orange stain flowing toward Keith’s elbow. “You’re making a mess,” he mumbled, and Keith pressed the bit of mango to Lance’s lips. He swallowed it, then set about licking Keith’s fingers clean, which made Keith’s tail flick in the kind of way that Lance had come to associate with him being interested.

“I’d go back with you if I could,” Keith said. He dragged spit-wet fingers down Lance’s cheek, and a distant part of him thought it was gross, but most of him thought it was tender.

“I know you can’t stay out of the water that long, it’s okay.”

“Well, yeah, and I also don’t have a passport,” Keith said, “Matt told me I probably couldn’t leave the country unless I, like. Swam all the way there.”

“That’d take a while.”

“We’re technically migratory, but yeah, no. That’d be a bit much.”

Lance laughed and leaned in to kiss him. Keith only let it go on for a brief moment, because he tended to either overestimate or underestimate the length of time kisses were supposed to take, but it tasted sweet all the same.

“Show me your drawing,” Keith said, gesturing at Lance’s sketchbook, which he picked up and turned to face Keith.

“It’s not exactly a finished... anything, but. It was nice to sketch you,” he said, reaching to brush a bit of loose graphite off the paper.

“It’s amazing,” Keith said, his eyes wide, lips pressing together into a wry smile. “I... I definitely don’t look like that.”

“Yes you do,” Lance protested, reaching for his bag. He set the sketchbook on top of it and pulled his phone out of the side pocket, opening up the camera to snap a quick picture of Keith’s face. “See?”

Keith laughed and pushed Lance's phone away. "Delete that, dumbass."

"Oh my god, your tail's not in it," Lance said, "you just look like some guy with weird face tattoos and purple eyes."

"No, delete it because I'm making a stupid face." Keith poked at the screen but only succeeded in zooming in on the image, which made his face look even weirder. "How do I make it go away," he muttered under his breath, prodding ineffectually at the screen like Lance's three-year-old niece did the first time somebody handed her a game on their phone.

"I'm keeping it," Lance said, locking his phone and tossing it back in his bag. Keith swayed forward, trying to catch it before he did, but he just overbalanced and landed in Lance's lap. Lance laughed, helping Keith back into a seated position, tucking him into his side. Keith's skin had been warmed by the late afternoon sun, and being out in the daylight so long was giving him these little flecks of lavender and indigo all over his shoulders and cheeks. At first, Lance thought they just looked like little freckles, but they shimmered as his face turned and they caught the light.

Keith tucked his face into Lance's shoulder, both hands taking Lance's, still a little sticky from the mango. He swallowed, and Lance could hear his throat click. "I'm really going to miss you," he said, his voice hoarse, like it was hard to admit.

"Summer's not over yet," Lance said, squeezing Keith's hands tight in his. "And I'm coming back, okay? I'll, I'll visit." Even though he had no idea how he'd do that without somebody else paying for his plane ticket.

"Do you promise?" Keith asked, looking away like he was embarrassed by his own question.

"Yeah," Lance said, running his thumb along Keith's knuckles. "I promise."

— — —

Two nights before Lance's flight was scheduled to leave, he was lying in bed with Keith, skin cooling off from the first round. Keith was still pressed

in a line against him, which made him feel like there'd be a second.

Lance's last research project had been finalized earlier in the week, so he had a few days off right at the end, and he'd been doing some sightseeing, taking Keith with him into town and around the island. He'd finally learned how to drive Matt's ATV and Keith enjoyed riding shotgun, even though he was convinced he could drive it. Lance wasn't sure you necessarily needed a license for this thing, but it was enough of an excuse to keep Keith from getting behind the wheel.

After they got back to the lab's apartment that night, he and Keith were immediately over each other, because both of them knew it'd be a while before they could do this again, and they clung to each other with a certain kind of desperation that didn't kill the mood so much as intensify it.

This kind of thing had been going on since the research had been safely sent off, and the previous night, on the beach, Lance had learned it was weird as hell to have Keith's dick in his mouth when it was all fishy and stuff.

This time, Keith was human, or as human as he could get, and the two of them had been too harried to slow down and do much more than rub off against each other. Lance was half-certain he hadn't stopped kissing Keith the whole time, Keith's mouth needy against his. He was left with a smarting cut on his lower lip from the fangs.

If Keith was in fish-form, his gills would be flaring open and closed under the palm Lance had on his ribcage, but as it were, his chest just heaved, his breath dampening Lance's collarbone.

"I want you to fuck me," Keith said, in no uncertain terms, fire in his eyes like he'd argue Lance half to death if he tried to suggest otherwise.

He was definitely not suggesting otherwise. His come was still drying on Keith's thigh, but his dick was trying its best to be as interested as his brain was, fuck the refractory period.

"You sure?" he asked anyway, because Keith hadn't bottomed before. He'd sucked on Lance's fingers and then let him duck them between his thighs

and touch him down there, but he hadn't actually put anything inside himself, and Lance was pretty sure the first time that happened was an *experience*, whether or not you were a mythical creature.

"I'm sure," Keith said. He ducked his gaze to a nondescript spot on Lance's chest. "I need it." He acted like he was admitting to some weird kink, not like he just wanted to switch things up, and it was kind of cute, if unnecessary. Lance was down for doing whatever Keith needed, especially if what Keith needed involved Lance fucking him, because he wasn't gonna lie, he'd been thinking about it. He'd just figured Keith wasn't into it, because after two and a half months of fucking and then dating, Keith hadn't brought it up once.

"So, what brought this on?" he asked, unsticking himself from Keith's front to grab some tissues and do some mid-sexual-encounter cleanup, because things were gonna go from a regular amount of gross to really gross, really fast if he didn't.

Keith shrugged. "I've just been thinking about it. You always seem to like it, and I thought I should try it once before you..."

Ah. Right. They weren't mentioning the part where Lance was leaving in forty-eight hours and some change. It was an unspoken rule, but Keith bringing it felt wrong all the same, and Lance scrambled to right things, easing the tension with, "yeah, of course, I'll—I mean, I'm not gonna say no to that. Just watch out. I might blow your mind." He winked playfully and Keith rolled his eyes, not without a smile.

"You can try," Keith said, his grin widening to show off a few more fangs than usual. Lance crushed his mouth to Keith's even though it made his lower lip sore.

The mood was back like they'd never lost it, and Keith was attached to his neck, apparently trying to give Lance hickies that'd still be there next summer. Lance didn't mind, because it was extremely sexy in that moment and he ignored the fact that it'd hurt like hell the next morning. And probably for the next week, because those fangs came dangerously close to actually breaking skin.

Lance rolled onto his back, pulling Keith to straddle him, hands on his thighs, then his ass, groping more than he usually did. It just made Keith bite him harder. Man, Matt was gonna make fun of those marks. Lance had never seen him with them, and assumed Shiro was a little more polite than Keith, which was true in pretty much every other situation.

Keith leaned over to yank the bottle of lube off the crate next to Lance's bed that was serving as an artsy nightstand and pressed it into his chest with a, "hurry up, I want it," and again, Lance wasn't gonna say no.

He traced the marks on Keith's side and back with one hand while he flicked open the top of the bottle with the other, able to map them out without looking by now. "Okay, well, I'm gonna have to start off slow," he said, because sure, they had the benefit of Lance not having a giant fish dick, but it didn't mean it'd be *easy*.

And, even though he wasn't thinking about the airport and leaving the island and any of it, he still sort of wanted to make things last.

"Tell me if it hurts," he said, and Keith nodded, bracing his hands on Lance's shoulders, leaning over him, and alright, Lance was already having fantasies of Keith riding him. Lance rested his head against Keith's chest as he reached between his legs, watching until he could only see his wrist, then closing his eyes and feeling out the rest.

Keith's fingertips dug into Lance's shoulders with the first finger, his nails with the second, and Lance shuddered to think what he'd do with a third.

"Relax," Lance urged him, his free hand petting down Keith's side as gently as he could, avoiding the place high on his ribs that Keith didn't like being touched because it was where his gills normally were and somehow made him feel like he couldn't breathe, even when he was fully human.

Keith loosened his hands on Lance's shoulders, but he knew he'd have a series of eight fingerprint-shaped marks there. He didn't mind a bit. He'd probably be more upset when they faded in a couple days, and he could no longer see where Keith had touched him.

“Can I put another one in?”

“Yeah,” Keith said, wrapping his arms around Lance, pulling him closer. Keith tucked his face into Lance’s shoulder and his hair smelled like seawater and sweat and Lance wanted to memorize its scent. Keith whined high in his throat when Lance added another finger, and Lance wondered if he’d start making those super-sonic noises again. He’d like to get some more of those out of Keith.

The longer Lance moved, the more Keith started to relax. He spread his legs and they slumped uselessly to the sides, thrown over Lance’s, because Keith frequently forgot how to use them when he was too aroused to bother. “Does it feel okay?” Lance asked, spreading his fingers just a bit, opening Keith wider as slowly as he could. He wasn’t entirely perfect at it, distracted by his own arousal, and it rendered his movements jerky and uncoordinated despite his best attempts to keep them steady.

Keith didn’t seem to mind. “Yeah, it’s good. It’s so good, Lance.” The rest of it was indecipherable moaning, but it seemed to back up the first bit.

God, and Lance hadn’t even found his prostate yet.

Did Keith have one of those?

He must have, because when Lance’s fingers curled up, rubbing at what seemed like the right spot, Keith’s breath hitched in his chest and he pulled Lance closer, until Lance could feel Keith’s nose and mouth smushed against his shoulder. Keith was clearly trying hard not to scratch Lance’s back, but he did it anyway, his fingernails drawing angry red trails across Lance’s skin. By tomorrow, they’d disappear into his tan, but he’d still be able to feel them, and that was what really mattered, anyway.

Lance took longer than he strictly had to, because it was Keith's first time, and it was—possibly the only time he got to do this with Keith.

He stopped thinking about that. Keith seemed to prefer fucking to talking about how much they’d miss each other even though they hadn’t parted yet,

and Lance was inclined to agree. Why miss somebody who was still here in his arms?

And if he was still thinking about anything other than what was in front of him, it all faded away when he finally pushed into Keith. The feeling of him around Lance's cock was second to the look on his face—like he'd already come, his eyes rolled up, mouth dropping open to reveal little angry red marks where his teeth had been digging into his lower lip. His dick was still hard against Lance's belly, though, wet at the tip and smearing it against Lance's skin.

"Does it feel good?" he asked, pausing halfway in, giving Keith a moment to adjust.

Keith did not take a moment to adjust. What Keith *took* was the rest of Lance's cock, wrapping his legs around Lance's waist to force him deeper, and it dragged a choked noise of surprise from Lance's throat.

"Does it feel good." Lance didn't know how Keith managed to sound sardonic when his voice was still so breathy. "You know it feels good. You're looking at my face. You know how I feel."

"Maybe I just wanna hear it," Lance teased, rocking back out of him, not pressing forward until Keith gave him some kind of affirmation.

Keith touched Lance's lips, something he did when he was too overwhelmed to actually kiss Lance, but wanted to. Lance assumed putting such biteable appendages as fingers on-slash-in somebody else's mouth was something of a symbol of trust for Keith.

"It's good," he said, finally, "It's so good, Lance, fuck me."

He did, with enthusiasm, kissing Keith's fingers and sucking them into his mouth. Keith's other hand was a vice around his bicep, clinging to him like the point of contact was the only thing grounding him. His thighs were still clamped around Lance's waist.

Keith didn't speak much after that, just breathing hard and moaning with every exhale, to the point where it sounded pornographically exaggerated, but Lance knew it wasn't. He rolled his hips with as steady a rhythm as he could manage, and for a while, Keith kept shoving himself down onto Lance's cock, meeting each thrust. Eventually, he either became too overwhelmed or just decided to leave Lance in charge, and he stilled, letting Lance take him.

Lance hadn't been fucking him long when Keith took his hand from his mouth, throwing both arms over his head and grasping at the sheets, thrashing, back bowed and face the brightest red Lance had ever seen. He kept going and Keith wailed, still within Lance's hearing range but not by much.

Keith sat up, just a few inches, propped up on his elbows. He faced Lance but didn't look at him, his eyes squeezed shut. He put both palms on Lance's chest and pushed, until Lance broke from the haze of the warm squeeze of Keith's body around his cock, freezing in place, because Keith was pushing him *away*.

"It's too much," Keith said, his eyes cast down, bright, almost like there were tears collecting in them. "I'm sorry, I'm so sorry, I need you to stop." He was still breathing hard, but it was starting to sound like sobs.

Lance halted immediately, gentling him, hand smoothing Keith's hair from his face. "Okay, it's okay, baby, we'll stop," he said, "do you need me to pull out?"

Keith nodded, wordlessly, and then repeated, "it's just too much."

If he thought about it, Lance wasn't surprised that it was this easy to overstimulate Keith. His inhuman senses made everything more overwhelming, so it had never been hard to push him past his limits. It was just that usually, being past his limits meant Keith losing control and having the time of his life, not whatever this was. Keith shook a little as he clung to Lance, the two of them laying on their sides. Lance stroked Keith's hair, and Keith pressed tight to him, and Lance didn't expect that Keith's cock would still be hard between their bodies, but it definitely was.

“Do you...? Still want?”

“Yeah, I still want,” Keith said. “I still want it. Just don’t put it in me again, I think... I think I need some time to get used to that.”

Lance’s hands traveled down Keith’s spine to the small of his back, pressing gently and urging Keith against him, shifting his own hips up until he had them lined up so Keith’s cock pressed against his. “Is this okay?”

“This is good,” Keith said. “I was getting too... I couldn’t think. I couldn’t think enough to, to kiss you, or... just couldn’t think enough to kiss you.”

Lance felt like his heart was made of tissue paper and somebody was crumpling it. *That* was what had gotten Keith. He’d been too overwhelmed to kiss.

He kissed Lance now, his mouth insistent, a little more tongue in it than usual—a little too much, if you asked Lance, but it was passionate, and Keith wasn’t stopping. He had one hand on the back of Lance’s head, keeping him firmly in place.

Keith threw one leg over Lance’s hips, grinding them together, the head of his cock rubbing against Lance’s, both of them slick because of the lube on Lance’s and because they were getting close, fast. Too fast. Lance wanted it to last so bad, but Keith tipped his head up to bite at his neck, really *bite*, enough that there’d be imprints not only of his canines, but his entire mouth.

“I want these to bruise,” he whispered, between sucking at the marks he’d left. Lance shoved a hand down between them and wrapped it around them both, thumb smearing over the head of Keith’s cock and then his. “I want you to go home with the feeling of me still on your skin.”

It was the first time he’d mentioned it, the first time he’d acknowledged that Lance was going to be leaving him soon. And it pushed Lance over the edge like he’d been booted off a cliff.

He could hear his pulse like someone was beating it into his eardrums, drumming in tune with the throb of the marks on his neck as Keith continued to suck, fucking into Lance's hand until he was adding to the mess between the two of them.

He kissed Lance's mouth, too, until his lips were sore enough to match his neck.

"I'm going to miss you so bad," Keith said, and he buried his face in Lance's shoulder, and there was salt water running down the curve of it that Keith hadn't brought from the ocean.

"I'll miss you too." Lance ran his thumb over Keith's cheek, catching on the little river trickling down.

Keith didn't say anything more, but the look on his face when Lance next met his eyes said he was grateful Lance pretended he hadn't noticed the tears.

— — —

Lance didn't ask Keith to come with him when Matt drove him to the airport, because he wasn't quite sure he'd step on the plane with Keith right there, entreating him to stay.

He hugged Matt tight for a while longer than was very professional, though, patting him on the back, because even though the guy was fucking crazy, he'd become a good friend.

Matt told him, "see you next summer," before he left, like it was a sure thing.

Lance was less certain, but he appreciated Matt's optimism.

It was gonna be a long-ass year.

— — —

The humid tropical air tasted familiar in Lance's mouth, even if the rest of his body wasn't used to the heat of it yet. He'd already sweat through his T-shirt in the time it took to wait for a cab to pick him up at the airport, and he plucked at it, grumbling a little as he cranked the window down. The cramped inside of the taxi wasn't much better, stuffed full of Lance's luggage until it threatened to spill out the windows. Lance had one small package on his lap to keep it safe from getting crushed: a box of cookies from his mom, and a tissue-wrapped shape on top that Lance was keeping a close eye on.

It was a pendant necklace, one that had earned him a lot of weird looks while he was purchasing it, because he'd asked the salespeople if it'd survive frequent exposure to seawater.

The winding road wasn't what had Lance feeling a little nauseated this time—that'd be the nerves. They'd started as soon as he started packing, and reached a near-breaking point on the flight over. Lance was grateful he'd been able to distract himself with a terrible in-flight movie, because having a panic attack on an airplane sounded like something straight out of a nightmare.

His heart was pounding so hard he could feel it in his throat as the taxi parked outside the house, giving him just enough time to unload his luggage before it sped away. Not like there were any other passengers out here.

Lance surveyed the pile of suitcases, random duffel bags, and the well-worn backpack in front of him, well certain he couldn't get it all up the stairs and inside at once. He'd brought a lot more than he had last summer, because being there for three months was one thing, and being there for a year was another, which required a lot more clothes and other stuff. Lance frowned, picking up the nearest bag and resigning himself to a couple of trips.

That was when he heard it.

“LANCE!”

It was Matt, followed by the slam of the door against the side of the house as he threw it open wide, and Lance turned, smiling, but it didn't quite meet

his eyes until another shape appeared in the doorframe, stepping out into the light to join Matt, who was running down the stairs to hug him, just a quick embrace that jostled him back a step and a firm pat on the back. Matt released him almost immediately, which was good, because Keith was faster than Matt was, and already looked like he'd been waiting impatiently for too long by the time Lance was free to fall into his arms.

Keith still carried that inhuman ocean scent, the one that had Lance buying a bunch of candles named things like "sea breeze" and "ocean waves" so he could find anything close. He was warm against Lance like he'd been lying out in the sun before he arrived, and when Lance ran his fingers through Keith's hair, he found it a couple inches longer.

"Did you miss me?" he asked, even though Keith had told him so during their frequent, frequently interrupted Skype calls, when his signal wasn't freezing or being blurred out because the internet sucked out here.

"Terribly," Keith said, and then kissed him, long enough and hard enough that Matt cleared his throat behind them.

"So, like. Are you guys going to help move all this stuff inside?" He had one of Lance's bags slung over his shoulder and he was looking very put-upon about it.

"Yeah, yeah," Lance said, kissing Keith's cheek one more time before disentangling himself, "but we're doing this fast, okay?"

"Yes," Keith said, hauling the heaviest of Lance's bags right over his shoulder before Lance could even tell him you were supposed to hold it by the handle. He looked at Matt. "You might want to stay downstairs for the next..."

"Hour?" Lance suggested.

"At least two."

"At least... holy shit, Keith." Lance sounded a little like he'd had the wind knocked out of him.

Matt was already walking back to the house. “You two are the worst, I hope you know this,” he called over his shoulder, and Keith already had his free hand in Lance’s back pocket and was bending to kiss him again, still hoisting the suitcase over his shoulder.

“Maybe three hours,” he said, quiet enough that only Lance could hear him.

“As long as you want.”

END

Author's Note:

Visit me on [tumblr/twitter/pillowfort](#) @luddlestons!